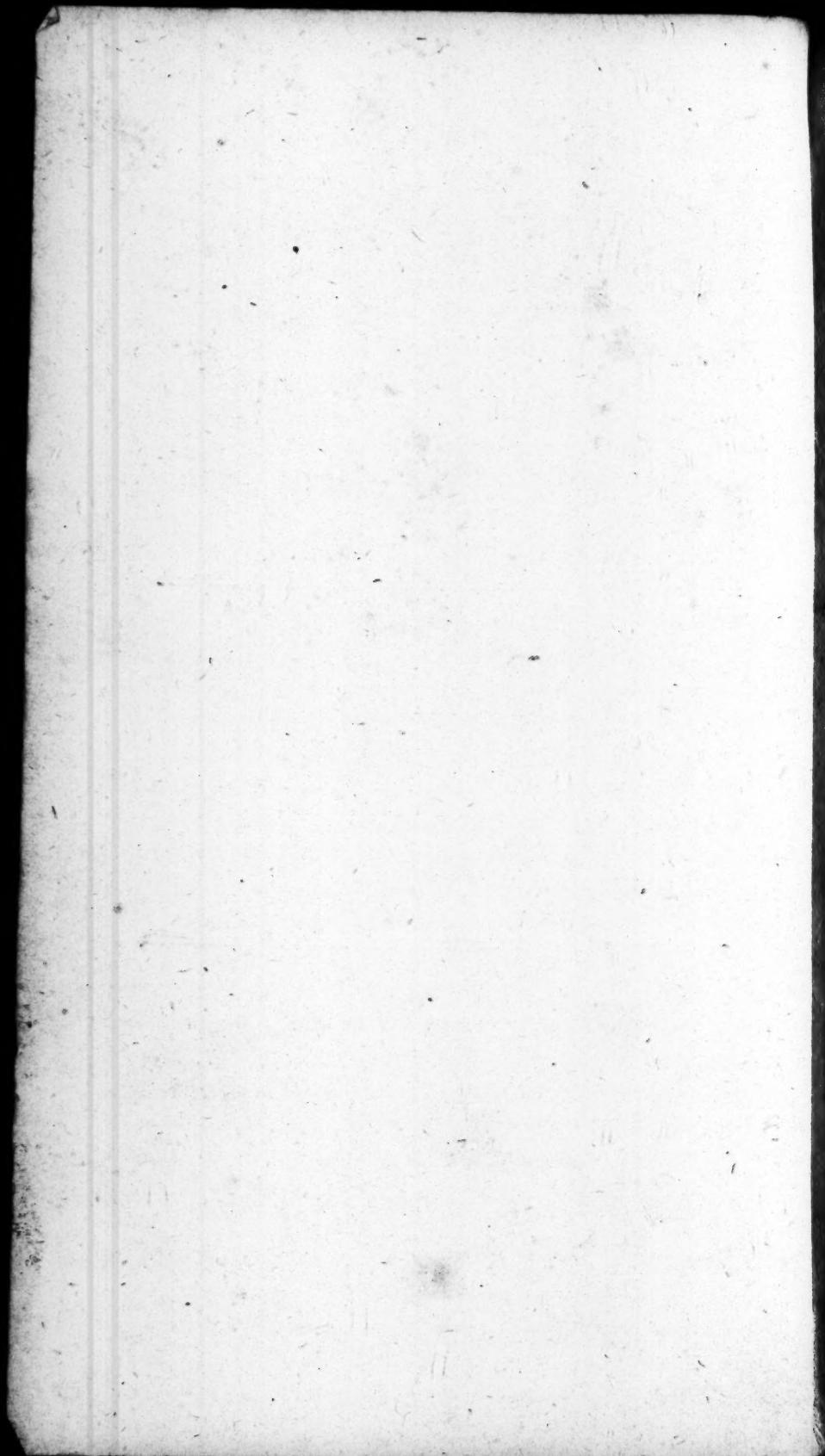


1507/90.

THE

ARMENIAN.



THE
ARMENIAN;
OR,
W. Schiller
THE GHOST SEER.

A HISTORY FOUNDED ON FACT.



TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF
F. SCHILLER,
AUTHOR OF THE ROBBERS, DON CARLOS, &c.
BY
THE REV. W. RENDER.



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THE
GHOST SEER.

LETTER VII.

JOHNSON TO LORD SEYMOUR.

November the 2d.

CIVITELLA's proposals to amuse the Prince, and to occupy his attention have succeeded. His hotel is crowded every day with guests, who are treated in a most excellent manner. He gives concerts and other entertainments, and is scarcely able to call an hour his own. If he is not at home, we naturally suppose that he is in another circle. The most extravagant expence which this causes, you may easily conjecture. I would that gaming had not been introduced. He has lost, in a short time, very considerable sums. From whom he obtains the money I cannot learn; for he wins nothing. He may borrow great sums of the Marquis I can believe; for, since he has persuaded him that he could command the world of Ghosts, he will do any thing for him. He seems to care for nothing, and is again a good companion. Concerning the last the Marquis triumphs not a little, because it supports his proposal; but the good man does not observe the worm which gnaws the heart of the Prince, whilst his countenance is drest in



smiles. I often see how he struggles with himself: The only thing which pleases me is, that he talks with respect upon religious matters, which he formerly treated with contempt. From this we may hope that he will not destroy himself.

November the 4th.

WHAT do you think?—The Prince has been to church!—This circumstance, which his people will not forget, and which I certainly did not dream of, Civitella persuaded him to. He was yesterday with the Prince, and spoke of a certain Bishop . . . who would preach to-morrow in the church of St. Marco. The praise which he bestowed upon the heart and genius of this man, excited the attention of the Prince so much the more, because the Marquis did not speak in general with any great veneration of the Clergy.

“I must hear your wonderful man,” said he; and the Marquis waited upon him the next day—that is to-day.

The sight of a great multitude, particularly when they come together to worship the Supreme Being, naturally affects us, and evidently makes a greater impression upon our mind if we have not been accustomed to it. He that feels it not, is destitute of sensibility. The Prince confirmed my opinion. He was in raptures. The richness and splendor of the church, the greatness of the multitude, that shewed, at least externally, signs of the sincerest devotion, contributed to augment the astonishment and reverence of the Prince. I should be but little acquainted with mankind, if I did not know that the brightest geniuses are attracted by pageantry; and, that the illuminations and laughable ceremonies of the Roman church work powerfully upon the mind. The incense, which

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is burnt at the altar, is very apt also to operate on our senses and excite our piety. Enchanting music began the ceremony. At last the Bishop went into the pulpit.—Friend, the Marquis was right; his description was far excelled by the man himself:—His appearance made us venerate him, and his enchanting countenance, which seemed to have upon it the stamp of divinity, influenced every one in his favour.—And when he began to speak! I might say with justice, that I never heard so much persuasive eloquence, united with such dignity and personal elegance. In one word, he is a preacher of great talents. At first he struck us with depth of thought, which had so much the more weight on account of his delivery. He then moved and awakened in us the warmest feelings for virtue and religion, and the greatest desire to follow his precepts, as the real principles of morality. From his mouth came truth, and we soon perceived how much he studied it, and how firmly he himself was convinced of it;—he pierced the heart, and was affected by his own eloquence. His voice is clear and solemn, and suited to bring the hardened sinner back to the path of virtue. When he preaches of love, there is a sweetness in his delivery not to be imagined, and he is firm and energetic when he will convince.—Oh! Friend! you must hear him yourself, if you will not believe me; for, where am I to find words to convey to you the perfection of one idea only?

He preached on the following subject, “The advantages which accrue to a man from religion supported by the dictates of reason.” A subject that was as applicable to the situation of the Prince’s mind, as if it had been purposely chosen. The whole of his sermon was divided into two heads. In the first he endeavoured to prove—“That re-

ligion ennobles our minds, and stimulates us to good actions, and is a firm support to us when oppressed with afflictions." And how admirably he proved it! One could not but be convinced. "Self-love," said he among other things, "as long as it does not become self-admiration, and consequently a vice, is the first and most distinguished principle which the wise creator has implanted in us. From it we derived all our actions, even the most sublime ones which approximate us to the Divinity—We admire a friend for the return of his affection—we love our relations—we assist the sufferer, and often save the lives of our neighbours, even at the greatest hazard; because we expect the same treatment in similar situations: we pardon our enemies, for the sake of those heavenly feelings which tell us, that we have acted nobly, and have advanced a step towards perfection! But how often does man act well, and is unknown; and how often has the best design a false operation; how often the good man suffers, because he acts consistently with his feelings? Shall he, for that reason, discontinue his efforts? No—he ought not to do it, even if his religion did not promise him a recompence in another world, if it did not tell him "Thy Creator knows the goodness of thy heart—the Lord knows it, if men do not acknowledge it." But I do not think, my friends, that I ought to allow man so much virtue as to suppose that he acts uprightly merely for its own sake; for we are never free from the influence of our passions which throw obstacles in our way in spite of all our endeavours to avoid them.

"Can we blame him who prefers the enchanting path of vice to that of virtue? Look into your own hearts, and answer me that question.

But

But when religion intervenes, she tells us, with certainty, that there is another life beyond the grave, in which men will be rewarded according to their deserts.

" What an inducement is this for us to become better, and faithfully to fulfill all our duties! what a great consolation, when we labour under misfortunes, to be able to say to ourselves, " Our life in this world is but a pilgrimage to the realms of everlasting peace!"

" With what anxiety does the tired wanderer endeavour to reach the place of his destination, though he knows that the break of day will call him forth to the continuation of his journey! how cheerfully he supports fatigue and trouble, when he recollects, that he is pursuing the path which leads him to his home, where he will meet his friends and relations!

" Can we then do less, my friends, when we know that eternal joy will be our recompence, and that we shall approach nearer to that God, who gave us friends and relations, who watches over the smallest circumstance of our fate, and even fastens the chain of our happiness on that which seemed to us to be unpropitious to it?

He now turned to the second part of his sermon, and shewed " what great tranquility religion gave us in death."

You should have heard this part. He drew a beautiful comparison between the death-bed of the pious, and wicked man. He alluded also to scepticks; for, said he—

" How can they be good, who believe not in any thing?—They must be more than men if, amidst all the oppressions of an unfeeling world, they look not for a reward for all their good actions in heaven. Upon what grounds does the Atheist

Atheist banish from his mind the just ideas of a Creator, and his divine influence? Is it that it would add more weight to the barrier that separates his soul from the paths of lust and wickedness?"

The manner in which he described the last hours of the profligate, must have pierced a heart of steel. He knew how to affect the virtuous, by forcibly describing such a death; and I might say with justice, that there was not one person present who did not seem to study his own reformation. And when he described the end of the impious, an icy coldness ran through my veins.—Every countenance seemed pictured with horror.—I looked at the Prince;—he was as pale as death, and appeared very much agitated. I hope it will be of service to him! That part of the sermon was delivered with such effect, that it was as if the dying person had been present, imploring the restitution of his health, that he might adore that God whom he had uniformly denied. But when he commented upon the impossibility of his wishes, as he was struggling with death, his eye rolled doubtfully, his voice sounded hollow, and death seemed to cut the thread of the curses which his stammering tongue uttered!—It was horrible. The voice of the Bishop added the greatest effect to this part. He stopt. There ensued a profound silence.

"And where shall we find the religion I have described?" he continued, "God be thanked, we have discovered it in our own!"

"Oh, my friends, you must acknowledge the advantage we have over so many thousands, who are not born of Christian parents, and who are obliged to live in darkness, whilst the clearest light shines upon you."

The manner in which he executed his task you must imagine, for I cannot attempt to describe the enchanting

enchanting sweetness of his eloquence, and am only able to give you an imperfect idea of it. You may judge what effect this sermon must have produced in the mind of the Prince. Receive this as a recompence for not having heard him yourself.

I could easily perceive that he was a Roman Catholic; but if they had acted thus in the times of Luther, if they had preached religion so pure, I believe there never would have been a reformation. He also mentioned the saints—but how? He represented them as a glorious host, worthy of imitation. And is not this admirable. I believe men cannot have too many good examples.

But my fancy leads me too far, and I should not chuse to write any thing contrary to what the Bishop said. For that reason, I will lay aside my pen until I am more familiar with the subject.

Yet who knows whether the whole sermon be not a plan of the Armenian.—Perhaps the Bishop is . . . I will not tell you what I think. It will be terrible if he is a hypocrite, and employs his uncommon talents to further the execution of a plan, which cannot possibly have a good end; because it requires so much artifice and cunning to complete it. No, no—I must not indulge such an idea.

Several days later.

SINCE that sermon the Prince has again given himself up to meditation. He shuns all society; and, if he is obliged to join them, he appears perfectly indifferent to any thing but reflection. But this seriousness is very different from his former; his countenance then expressed despair, but now a deep melancholy.

He has anxiously and studiously enquired after
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the Bishop. This man, I trust, will entirely work his reformation, and the Prince expects it; his enquiry also makes this certain: he will, in all probability, draw a comparison between his own actions and that man's manner of thinking—And he is right. The Bishop did the same when he mentioned our Saviour: “From their fruits you shall know them?”—Very probable this induced the Prince to adopt that resolution: it may be imagined; but outward actions are often so contrary to real principles, that one may easily be mistaken. But the Bishop is entirely that which he himself expects from a good Christian, or a noble mind, and he follows very exactly the rules which he prescribes.

I have this merely from hearsay, but where accounts agree exactly, we may put some confidence in the report. He is a father to the orphans, and a friend to the poor. He expends upon himself nothing but what is absolutely requisite, the other part of his fortune he reserves to fulfill the duties of his station; and the prudence with which he bestows his charity gives it a high and deserved lustre. Those who prefer idleness to industry, obtain very little from him; but all those who are prevented by a noble pride from accepting a gift from the hand of charity, and those who are oppressed with misfortunes, and struggle against want and misery, have in him a certain and benevolent supporter. He has a list of all the poor people in Venice, and assists those he thinks the most deserving. It appeared singular to me, that he spent so much money amongst foreigners who live here. Indeed the Venetians do not deserve it, for the cause of their poverty is their idleness, there scarcely can be made one exception. He always is respectful to his inferiors; and is a perfect en-

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my to that pride, which makes part of a character of a priest. To his servants, who have all grown old in his service, he is a father. In short, every thing that I hear of this man, is in his praise. But the history which the Marquis has related of him, is a proof that he well knows how to observe the higher duties of his situation, which has made me venerate his character. A certain . ti. here was his deadly enemy. Perhaps he envied his merits, and the esteem which was every where shewn him: This was sufficient reason for a jealous villain to hate him. To imitate him he was unable, but he was capable of endeavouring to murder him. He was big with this diabolical idea; but the retired life of the Bishop, and the multitude which always conducted him home, to enjoy his company, made the execution of it always impossible.—Amongst the servants of the Bishop, there was a young man whom he sincerely loved, and educated. Although endowed with many good qualities, he was attached to gaming; upon which the Bishop sometimes gave him a severe lecture. This young man . anti . endeavoured to make an instrument of his villainy. He could not do any thing by fair means, and therefore had recourse to treachery. He hired people to induce him to pursue the most extravagant plans, and to deprive him of his money by any method. The vice of gaming soon took deep root, and his very existence seemed to depend upon it. If what his master gave him was not sufficient, he resorted to theft. The Bishop, far from being suspicious, concluded that the deficiency of his money arose from his forgetfulness, and did not accuse any of his people; but it was soon more and more visible, and the Bishop, at last, became uneasy, particularly as he missed some

valuable things. The thief was discovered. Not quite hardened in his wickedness, his confusion and down-cast eyes betrayed him; he could not look in the face of his benefactor. The Bishop admonished him with severity, but he was too far gone to feel its effect. His villainous companions had so corrupted him by their wicked advice, that he was a finished gambler; and what is it that is sacred in the eyes of such an infamous character?— It was not difficult to persuade him to mix a powder in the chocolate which he always served to his patron, and by that means poison his benefactor and friend. He was induced to undertake this diabolical act, by the promise of a large reward, and also the certainty of gaining something by his master's death, which he had discovered by prying into his will, which was placed in a writing-desk. His limbs trembled as he presented the cup to his master, so that he had almost let it drop. The Bishop was engaged in reading a book, and did not observe the uneasiness and anxiety which tormented his servant. He did not take the cup before he had finished the chapter. When he had done, he repeated the last passage, “if the first principles of vice are imbibed, the rest is to be acquired very easy by a hardened sinner.”—“Yes it is, indeed it is,” he added with a deep sigh.

At the same moment the unfaithful wretch fell senseless at his feet, the cup was broken, and the poison spilt upon the ground. He thought that his master was conscious of his malicious intention, and had spoken those words purposely to warn him of his wicked design. But how could a mind, like his, entertain such a thought, or suspect a man, to whom he had shewn the attention of a father, capable of so vile an action? He endeavoured to call a wretch to life, who was on

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the point of taking away his own. During that time, a little dog, which had licked up the poisoned draught, tumbled in a convulsive manner about the room. He immediately perceived what was going forward.—Tears came into the old man's eyes, when he reflected that his servant could be guilty of such a crime. And how do you imagine that he treated him?—He not only pardoned him, and concealed the fact, but retained him in his service, as if nothing had happened.—On that account one of his relations reproached him.

" Shall I make this man more miserable than he is at present?" he replied; " If he is to be reclaimed, it will certainly be effected by my treatment, and how much glory shall I acquire if I save but one soul!—If I discard him, I believe he will then become a perfect villain; on the contrary, he probably, by my indulgence, may be reclaimed."

When it was observed to him, that he should be upon his guard in future against any new attempts to murder him, he answered,

" A good and benevolent God watches over the life of a sparrow; can I doubt then, that he is not mindful of mine? The path which he has prescribed to me no mortal can obstruct; of that I have already many proofs.—If it pleases the Almighty that I should die by the hand of an assassin, there will be found others besides him to perpetrate the deed."

He stood firm to his opinion, and Oh! the recompence! It has succeeded in a most excellent manner:—He has entirely converted this man, and beholds daily the proofs of the warmest gratitude, and there is not one about his person that is more attached to him. The Bishop discovered

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the motive that induced him to seek his life. He could have made the miserable projector of it feel his wrath; but what did he do? He went to . anti . . his deadly enemy, and begged his pardon if he had given him any reason to hate him, and offered him his hand in reconciliation. Such a virtue the basest ingrate could not despise; he was overpowered with sorrow, and falling upon his knees, craved his merciful forgiveness, and promised to amend his life, which he has faithfully performed. The reason why he hated the Bishop was, as he said, on account of a sermon, in which he felt himself very much aggrieved; and also that it was intolerable to hear him so generally praised and beloved.—You must know, . anti . . is also a priest, and he thought that they were bestowing that portion of praise due to him, upon the Bishop.

The Prince wishes to be acquainted with the Bishop. I rejoice that it is so, and hope he will profit by the connexion. How it has happened that he was not sooner acquainted with him, I cannot tell. The noble-minded man must be sought for, but other acquaintances are very easily attained. No wonder, for he is a Prince!

I must not forget to tell you, that a few days ago, the Bucentauro was abolished; not by the senate, but the society having consented to it themselves.—What do you say to that?—The reason for it I do not know, and even the Prince seemed ignorant of it; for although they told him they had done it because they disliked it, he will not believe it.—Perhaps the Inquisition has prohibited their meetings, and they are afraid to run the risk of having their principles exposed; or, perhaps, the cunning Bucentaurists are in league with the Armenian, and wish, by the separation of their society,

society, to fix the attention of the Prince upon another point. Let this be as it may, I am satisfied. The Prince is rejoiced at the event; for, without it, he could not well have separated himself from it:—a proof that he was not quite fit for a society, which did not seem to be founded on a good principle.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

JOHNSON TO LORD SEYMOUR.

November the 18th.

AT last the Prince's wish is fulfilled : the Bishop has been with him. He has been a journey, which has prevented him, till now, from complying with the request of the Prince. I thought he was a middle-aged man from his appearance ; I was astonished when I accidentally heard from him that he was already far advanced towards seventy. His uncommon health and gaiety is the consequence of a moderate manner of living. The Prince has been charmed with his company. No person, besides me, could attend to their conversation, because they believed I did not understand it. How many advantages have I already reaped from affecting to be unacquainted with the Venetian language. They look upon me as an absent person ; and I must tell you, that I am, on that account, a great acquisition to the Prince ; because he thinks that he has an attendant by him at all times whom he has no suspicion of—for he is too prudent to trust the other servants in the antichamber, on account of their curiosity.

With open arms the Prince received the Bishop, when he entered the house, and conducted him into his room.

“ I heard your sermon not long ago, great and noble man, and it affected me very much. I have had a description of your character and conduct, and it has increased my esteem for you. It is on that account that I approach you without the accustomed ceremonies, and with a friendly veneration.”

“ Prince

" Prince, your countenance is so sincere, that I cannot consider your words as a joke."

" Joke !—Joke !—Good God, what an opinion you must have of me !"

" Not so; but is it possible, that one single sermon can have had such an effect upon you ?—I am not accustomed to severity, Prince. But many years experience have taught me, that persons like you, who despise all that is sacred and good, cannot easily be brought to esteem those who speak of a God, whom they reject and deny. On that account, you must at least think me a pious simpleton, who merits your compassionate smile."

The Prince was dumb.

At last he exclaimed :

" Oh ! as you love your enemies, do good to them, and confirm the truth of your doctrines, which you preach with such eloquence. Do not let me be the being whom you despise—I have pursued a wrong path, not willingly, but through the influence of deceit and iniquity, I have long wandered in the desert, and could find no resting-place; will you now reject a penitent, who puts his whole confidence in your superior wisdom ?"

With great warmth the Bishop took him by the hand.

" Entertain not such an idea. But if the surgeon will cure a dangerous wound, he must probe it with his instrument, to try how deep it has penetrated. This operation is indeed very painful to the patient; but can the surgeon undertake the cure without it ?—Will he not learn by that, what means must be employed ?—I must first sound you, and upon the good foundation, which perhaps may still be left, I will build my structure. God be thanked, who works so powerfully by such feeble means. I should not have believed that

that my sermon could produce such an effect upon your mind. The way to the heart of a Prince is, in such a case, very difficult, and your sufferings only have made you so susceptible. Thank God, that you are not above inquiry. I always speak the truth, Prince; do not wonder, because you hear it very rarely."

" Will you, then, be so kind as to instruct me?"

" Why not?—It is my duty. It is well for you that you came before me. When they begged of me to preach that sermon, I was struck with the idea that it might be of service, and save you."

The Prince interrupted him: " How! they entreated you to preach a sermon to me, was it not then mere accident?"

" I was instructed as to every particular."

" And by whom?"

" I do not know him; but the anxiety which he displayed for your welfare, and on which he seemed to dwell with uncommon concern, has made him dear to me. He expected from my sermon much effect, and promised that you should be present. The desire I had of doing good made me comply with his request."

And can you guess who this man was?—The Armenian—You are astonished, and I not less; the Prince was half mad. He related to the Bishop several things which had happened to him with this wonderful man, and hoped to obtain some knowledge of him, but he assured him, that he had seen him then for the first time in his life. And who would not believe him?

What are we to think of this?—Perhaps it is part of the plan, upon which the old man spoke to Biondelle. We may suspect what will be the consequence

quence of this visit; for the society of the Bishop must turn to the Prince's advantage. If they make him a proselyte by means of the Bishop, they would not find their end answered; because this man is calculated to set a good example, and to instil into the Prince's mind the best ideas without letting the religion he professes interfere. It is a great pity that they did not converse on the subject of the Prince's opinions; for they constantly talked about the Armenian, and then some business called the Bishop away. He promised to return again, and the Prince has determined to visit him.

As Civitella persuaded the Prince to go with him to church, what was more natural than that the Prince should suspect that he was connected with the Armenian? To be convinced of that, he sent immediately for the Marquis to wait upon him. The servant met him at the gate.

"Marquis," exclaimed the Prince, as he entered the room, "your visit is well-timed; I had just sent to invite you here, to question you upon a subject of great importance. You know how much trouble the Armenian has already given me. Now I am confident you must be acquainted with him. I expect an explanation from you."

The Marquis was alarmed, and answered not a syllable; the words seemed to tremble on his lips.

"You will not then give an explanation? You are the only person that can do it."

"Explanation!—Indeed I am not able to give it you, and perhaps no mortal living."

"And yet you spoke to him!"

"Alas! Gracious Heaven! I spoke to him!"

"If a spark of friendship glimmers in your breast, tell me instantly what you know of him."

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" Demand my life, gracious Prince, I willingly will sacrifice it, for you have deserved it, but — — —

He hesitated, and became visibly more confused. The Prince's patience left him.

" You will not then," he exclaimed violently— " Now hear me. I know that you and the Armenian are in league with each other. Was it not at his request that you persuaded me to go with you to the church of St. Mark?"

The Marquis fell into a terrible convulsive fit. His limbs trembled, his teeth chattered, and his countenance was black and horrible to look on.— The fit increased, and we were obliged to carry him home. The Prince now thought him innocent, and seemed to feel for him.

" But if he is innocent, from whence this strange conduct?" he exclaimed.

Several hours had passed, when a servant of the Marquis came, breathless, and requested the Prince to go immediately to his master, who had something of great importance to discover to him. He hesitated not a moment, but went as quickly as possible. After an interval of four hours, he came back again in deep thought. He related what happened to him to the Baron F * * And, as I was present, and heard every thing very distinctly, I am able to communicate it to you word for word.

The Prince threw himself into an arm-chair, and seemed very much affected. The Baron F . . . approached him with great concern, not being able to conceal his sensations.

" You will pardon me, gracious Prince, I am confident, when I entreat you to make a discovery of that which afflicts you so much. It will be preserved as a sacred treasure in the bosom of one

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of your most humble and faithful servants, whose sincere wish is to sacrifice himself, if it could in any manner promote your happiness. There was a time when you thought me worthy of your confidence."

The Prince seemed to start as from a dream and looked suspiciously at the Baron."

" Yes, you are right ; there was a time, when the repose of my soul resembled the smooth surface of a lake from which every object is reflected in the most beautiful manner. Yes, yes, there was once such a time, and then I found myself happy. Can I help regretting that, that period is past, and all is now as if influenced by the storms of Heaven ; and that nothing remains for me but a lively picture of my former situation ? Tell me yourself can I forget it ?"

Tears came into the eyes of the good Baron F * * * and sorrow almost overpowered his speech.

" Oh ! my gracious Prince, I have not deserved this—I spoke of the confidence which I once enjoyed."

The Prince came to his recollection, perhaps by my pushing something against his arm-chair ; in the mean time, for appearance sake, I affected to have some business in the room.

" Did you not intend to ask something of me, dear Baron ?"

" To entreat your Highness to discover to me the sorrow which oppresses you."

" And what end will that answer ? can you assist me ? can you conduct me from a labyrinth in which I find myself every hour more and more bewildered ?"

" If I am not able to effect the last, will your Highness refuse me the happiness to share your misfortunes with you ?"

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The Prince looked at him sternly. It seemed to convey a great deal of information. What if the Baron has written something to Count O . . . which he is not able to answer for in such a manner as to clear his character !

" You shall, you must know it,"—said he at last:—" for I am well convinced of your secrecy as to every thing that concerns me ! "

At these words F . . . changed colour, and the Prince, perceiving it, went on :

" You know that I was called to the Marquis. I found him very ill. He had scarcely sufficient strength to raise himself in his bed, and to give his hand." " I have invited you to call on me, said he, to give you a key to my conduct to-day. I am at the brink of the grave, and should not like you to be impressed with the idea that I have deceived you. I know not the Armenian who is so much concerned in your history. I saw him but once in my life ; your suspicion was unfounded. How could I have a communication with a being that is supernatural.—He appeared to me and commanded me to persuade you to go to that church. If I fulfilled his request, he would acknowledge my obedience to his command. It was for that purpose only that he had selected me, and I know not that it was actually necessary. I listened to his commands with terror, and should have fulfilled them even if parricide had been required to do it. He desired me however to observe the most profound secrecy, but my love for you induces me to violate my promise, and as I am verging towards the end of my days, nothing of any consequence can befall me. Be it what it may, it will only hasten my death, which I look upon now as a welcome friend ; the very idea of it raises my soul to the highest pitch of ecstasy.

Now

Now arm yourself with courage dearest Prince, to hear a history that will make your hairs stand erect; and which will give you an idea of the supernatural greatness of that Armenian. To him may be ascribed my acquaintance with you, and my present illness; for I was just on the point of answering your request, to justify not only my character, but to give you also a perfect idea of this being. I thought in such a case I was acting right, but I found my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and all animation suspended!—I have at present nothing more to dread, as death and my love for you raise me above the power of fear: perhaps my discoveries may be useful to you."

"He stopped suddenly. The hasty manner with which he spoke those last words did not escape me. He now seized my hand with great violence, and hurt me so much that I still feel the pain.

"Alas, protect me! protect me from his wrath" he exclaimed with a voice that chilled my very soul with horror.

"Thou hast not gone through the trial which thou oughtest to have done, in order to gain admission into the Temple of Truth, which thy mind entitled thee to. Attribute to thyself the consequences of thy obstinacy. Thou wast very disobedient to me! I warned thee, thou didst not attend. Oh fool! if thou hadst not been at this present moment disobedient, thou wouldst have soon reached the goal!"

"These words were spoken by some one behind me, the voice of whom seemed to be known to me. I looked up and perceived the Armenian.

"My astonishment was beyond all conception. He walked with a slow step through the room, and the

the door seemed to shut itself after him. My recollection returned. Whatever I might undergo, the desire of speaking to him superseded all my fears. I rushed out of the room, but no Armenian was to be seen or heard of. Upon the stairs I met an old priest who had been sent to the Marquis to give him extreme unction. I thought he could not have escaped him, but he had seen nothing of him. That he had secreted himself was not in any manner possible, for he was obliged to go either down or up the staircase, and the Cardinal, who had just come down, in the greatest sorrow, on account of the situation of his beloved nephew (who as you know, by his reformed manner of life had again acquired his esteem) had likewise seen nothing of him.

" My mind was now tormented with doubt and horror.

" I went back with the Cardinal to the room. He found the Marquis senseless. I flattered myself that he would recover and finish the history, which had excited my curiosity so much. But I hoped in vain ; he continued delirious. The Cardinal refused consolation, and abandoned himself to despair. I could not endure a sight so distressing, and when I reflected upon my own situation I was half distracted. I would have readily sacrificed my life could I but have discovered the Armenian."

" You will, ere long,—you shall be nearer acquainted with him, if your obedience makes you worthy of it," exclaimed a hollow piercing voice.

" My obedience ! said the Prince," after an exceeding long pause, as his countenance and position both announced perfect submission in every thing.

This

This very evening, at a late hour, we heard that the Marquis Civitella was no more. The Prince received the news with melancholy silence. I could plainly see how deeply he felt his loss.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

November the 17th.

THEY have threatened to imprison the Prince, if he does not pay his debts in twenty-four hours. I thought it would come to this; although I did not believe that he had received his loans from the hands of usurers.

All the creditors of the Prince are alarmed; for his insolvent situation is every where known. The poor Prince! How shall we save him?—You are not able to do it; for, in all probability, the money you are possessed of is not sufficient. To extricate himself, he has offered to pay enormous interest, which exceeds even half of the capital. He has no friend to whom he can unfold his distress. The kind Marquis is dead, and his uncle, the Cardinal, has, since his decease, lost his senses, and is not to be spoken with. The situation of the Prince is truly pitiable. Flight would be the only means to save him. Biondello proposed it to him, but he is too noble to degrade his character by such a step. He will wait the event with fortitude.

November the 18th.

TO-DAY I heard that the Prince is not so much involved, as I at first expected. The whole amount of his debts, with the interest, is about one hundred thousand zechins: a large sum certainly to be spent in so short a time, but I hope that you will procure it. You have not told me how much you have received, but that it is a large sum I easily can imagine. God be thanked that it

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is so, and that the Prince met with this misfortune. It will probably be the road to his safety. Oh! how anxiously I wait for that period when you will rush into his arms, and save him as a friend!

Do not be astonished, that I now contradict my former opinion, and beg that you will discover yourself to him. It is surely the best plan we can pursue. He will, in his present situation, acknowledge your kindness with double the gratitude. Such affection will rivet him to you for ever. You will represent me to him as your friend, who worked with you for his safety; my letters to you, and moreover my ability in mountebank tricks, by which they have deceived him, will convince him of the fact, and will open his eyes, or at least may give him a suspicion of the people in whom he has put so much confidence. We shall save him; he will fly with us from this vile city, and be restored and reconciled to his court.

Oh that I were able to relate to you all the good consequences which will follow this proceeding! But all this is unnecessary; you do not want any inducement to urge you to act magnanimously;—but use all the expedition in your power, for, before sunset, the Prince will be arrested, and he cannot expect any indulgence from usurers!

P. S. Do not give yourself any further trouble, friend; all our fears, for the present, are gone. The debts of the Prince are paid; and he has obtained further sums of money, just as I was going to seal this letter. But misfortune sometimes proves a benefit, for what should we have done, if I had known it, a few hours later? We should have betrayed ourselves, and perhaps have lost all means to prosecute our undertaking. But I still have great hopes, and it makes me tolerably easy in my unpleasant situation. And do you know

who has paid all these sums?—The Armenian!—For what reason does this man haunt the Prince? This is a certain proof, that the scheme they are trying is of consequence.

The Prince was prepared for the arrest; and conceive his astonishment, when the creditors came to give him their receipts, and returned him the money he had advanced to them on account.

They all begged pardon for their conduct, and assured him that they would not have taken violent measures, if they had not been made anxious for their money, and to lose it would have made them beggars. Who urged them to be so clamorous, he could not imagine. Although the Prince was astonished that the Armenian had paid his debts, he had sense enough to appear as if he knew of the proceeding, and this induced the creditors to think that the money came from his court.

The Armenian could not have found a better opportunity to make the Prince attached to him. He thinks of nothing but him, and is more anxious to learn who he is. He has forgot Civitella's death.

You go about the town in different characters; have you not been able to find out who the Armenian is?

LETTER X.

JOHNSON TO LORD SEYMOUR.

November the 23d.

THE Prince is always with the Bishop; and I know that their conversation is generally upon religious topics. It is a great pity that I cannot constantly be present for I hear only detached sentences, but from them I conclude, that the Prince will remain firm to his opinion, until thoroughly convinced to the contrary.

The Bishop appears every hour in a more amiable light. The mildness which he always shews, when endeavouring to controvert the objections of the Prince (which I must confess are often supported with great warmth) is inimitable, and is the sincerest proof, how much he wishes to appear like the man of God, whose doctrines he preaches. His talents in Theology, added to his eloquence, place every thing in the clearest light, so that it is impossible for any person to err in his opinion.

It always gave me the greatest happiness, to assist such a conversation, if it was possible for me to do it.

To day I was very fortunate. I will put as much of the conversation down as I can recollect. You will wonder that the Bishop does not betray the Catholic, who with the sword of faith cuts his way through all difficulties. He wishes to explain them, and to shew fundamentally to the Prince, how much is gained by a religion, which adopts a Supreme Being, and holds out a recompence for our good actions. It is very seldom that he mentions the proscribed religion in the Holy Scriptures,

and if he does, it is only when the Prince enquires about it. You see that he does not press it upon him, but goes step by step. I am wandering from the subject :—I promised to relate you to-day's conversation.

With the greatest impatience the Prince waited for the Bishop. At last he came. He hastened to conduct him to his arm chair, which is always set ready for him.

“ I have waited with anxiety for your arrival, dear father ! A new doubt has arisen within me concerning the existence of a Supreme Being.”

“ A doubt of the existence of a Supreme Being !—Oh ! I am very sorry for that ! Then we are not so far advanced as I believed. How is it possible that you can even admit such a thought ?”

“ I have been reading this book—it is beautifully written. So convincing !” (here he gave the book to the Bishop.)

“ Not convincing, Prince, but seductive.—Truth does not want any colour. I know the book. It is beautifully written, and for that reason so much the more dangerous. We feel not immediately the effect of poison that is hidden beneath sugar, and when we discover it, antidotes come too late.”

At these words the book was thrown into the fire and consumed. The Prince looked at the Bishop with a countenance full of anger. This did not escape the Bishop.

“ Do you regret the loss of the book ?—If so, I am sorry that I destroyed it ! But I hope not !”

“ You told me, yourself, that reasonable doubts would lead me nearer to the truth.”

“ Yes, Prince ; but did that book contain such ? And if it were so, you should not read it in your present situation. It will make you more difficult

to be brought into the way of truth, and probably prevent your obtaining that end, by the rejection of which you have lost so much already. A patient must submit to the prescriptions of the physician, and the convalescent must not be permitted to indulge in every kind of eatable, for fear of a relapse, which often is more difficult to cure than the first illness. So soon as you have acquired the true principles to act upon, you may read that book: you will then pity the author, and become firmer in the support of truth."

" Permit me to ask you a few questions. Why do we worship God?"

" Because he is the most perfect being."

" And from whence do we know that?"

" We conclude from the creation of the world."

" But this conclusion would be wrong if the world created itself?"

" Undoubtedly."

" There would also be no God, if he were not, at the same time, the Creator?"

" This follows from the idea which we have of him. An inactive God, were no God at all; at least he could have no influence over us."

" And if it were so? If the creation were a matter of chance?"

" If I thought that in any manner possible, I would give up my opinion without hesitation."

" Possible! You agree with me that all things are possible."

" The ideas of a madman!"

" Do you reckon, then, that the learned, witty and spirited * ol * * re was mad?"

" He proves it himself by many of his opinions; but do you not believe that a mad man may be reasonable in several things, whilst his malady centres upon one particular point?—Have you not experienced

experienced it by a living example in father Florentino, who thought that he was the Holy Ghost; and yet in every thing else was a rational and clever man."

" But the difference is that the former had grounds for his opinion, but the latter none."

" Have you ever heard them? And will you honour his folly with the name of reason?" I could, on the retrospect of your *ol ***re, return the objection upon you: But we are departing from our point. Tell me sincerely, do you not perceive the absurdity of the idea that the world created itself? Is the Creator and the creature the same? Did not the contradiction strike you at the first moment? Is it easier for you, and more adequate to your reason, to believe that the world was formed by chance, than to acknowledge an Almighty, all wise, and good Creator? Oh, Prince! how much are you corrupted by this shameful book!"

" Certainly, if you suppose that the world, before it existed, possessed within itself a power by which it produced itself, this would be undoubtedly the greatest contradiction:—but I do not suppose so; its materials did exist, and consisted merely in little solid indivisible bodies or parts, which are called atoms. These from their gravity had been falling from eternity, in perpendicular lines through the immensity of space. One of these forsook fortuitously its perpendicular direction, carried along with it a second, and these two still more, and from this concurrence arose Heaven and Earth, and all which exists in them."

" And you take this nonsense for probability? However, we will consider every part of your system separately, which you must not think to be the invention of your Author; for first Democritus, and after him Epicurus adopted it; and Cicero has so excellently refuted it, that this alone would

be quite sufficient. He says, somewhere, to the best of my recollection*—

“ That any one should maintain that this beautiful and perfect world was formed accidentally from single and solid corpuscles, I am not much surprised; but I do not at all perceive, why such a one should not believe, that if we shook together a great number of letters and threw them upon the earth, the Annals of Ennius would arise from them. I do not think that chance could ever compose one verse. And still further, if I am not mistaken,” continues he, “ if the world could have been formed by the junction of atoms, why did they not form some city, or a colonade, or temple, or a house, since all these require less, and are more easily constructed? However, as I said before, we will not rest our proofs upon the authority of another, but go regularly through the system, for it loses much by the hypothesis with which you are obliged to preface it.”

“ You suppose it space, in which the atoms existed, and were falling perpendicularly; that accident has driven one from its course towards another, and that these two again carried away more with them, and by that means every thing was created. Now give me leave to ask you—What is space?—Can you form to yourself any other idea of it than (what expression must I use) the circumference of the universe?

The Price remained silent.

“ I cannot. To me the idea of space is inseparable, from that of the corporeal world, as the idea of shade is from that of light. And if you suppose an infinite space! It does not, however, follow from that, that an infinite number of bo-

* De Nat. Deor. II. 37.

dies also must have existed, which it had surrounded ! For would not this be a new contradiction ? However, we will let that alone ; for the idea of space is beyond my philosophy, and I had rather confess this, than dogmatically obtrude my opinion upon any one . But let us proceed still further. I will ask you, what the atoms must peculiarly be, for you could give me no other answer on that head, than proposing to me, as you already have done, a new hypothesis. But how can you maintain that they fell perpendicularly, as there existed no basis, from which they could at first have taken their position ? What was in the boundless and empty space, according to your ideas, either beneath or above ? And if I should not consider that, but suppose every thing to have been as you say it was, what power was it then, which drove the first of those atoms from its original direction towards another, and these again to others ? And in short, where was the point at which they ceased to fall in perpendicular lines ? Was it chance ? Must that not also have its origin ? or, to express myself more clearly, must not some power precede that which causes this chance ?—If we know that power, we no longer call it chance. From hence it seems, that a circumstance may appear to be accidental to one person and not to another. Is this evident to you ?

“ Perfectly.”

“ Does it not still follow that a circumstance may appear to us merely accidental, which is not so in itself ?

“ It does not seem to be otherwise.”

“ That moreover the concatenation of the atoms cannot be in itself accidental, but must only appear so to us ?”

“ Certainly.”

“ And

" And how, if chance brought them together must not one of them have wandered from its original direction ? Is not this as much as saying that there was a power previously existing which caused this ? "

" After all the conclusions which you premised ; it must be so ! "

" And what is this power, if it is not God ? — Do not these contradictions strike you ? — But to conclude entirely ; I will grant that every thing hitherto was the effect of thought ; who arranged these atoms so as to form such an admirable and wonderful masterpiece as the boundless universe ? Who breathed life into man and brute ? — Who was able to unite every thing together so that there is no where to be found one vacancy, but in every place the most perfect order ? — Who created those atoms ? Oh Prince ! do you not feel within yourself that it must be a God ? "

" Yes, I feel it, and always have felt it ; but I would willingly be able to prove it, and from thence arose my doubts. Would you have me take a sentiment for truth ? "

" To what point will you at last come ! — Is not the reflection, that there is a God, who watches over our fate, more agreeable than the supposition that we are dependent upon chance ? "

" Yes, upon that very ground I should like to have incontrovertible reasons to convince me of it."

" Oh Prince ! I am sorry that you should still desire them. How could you by your feeble reason form an idea of a being for whom we have not even any sufficient expression ; who is far too sublime to be represented at all by us ."

" But why should our understandings be limited

exactly there, when it would be so beneficial to us if we could see further?"

" Why has not a child the understanding of a man?—Could not God when he was forming his creatures, give them the minds of angels?—and is a truth less a truth because we cannot prove it *a priori*?—Can you prove to any one the existence of the sun, or even your own existence?"

" He sees both, and that is the best proof."

" But how will you convince an idealist who considers every thing, except himself as a deception?—You see from this, that the most evident and clearest truths are the least demonstrable except by experience. Yet I will see whether the creature is able to give a proof of the existence of his eternal creator!"

" If you discover upon a desert island some considerable work, would you not conclude from thence that men must have lived there before, to whom it owes its origin?"

" Undoubtedly."

" Or could you suppose, that the wind had driven together the materials from every country, and united them together according to the rules of art? would you not think him a madman who would support such a supposition?"

" I could not think otherwise."

" And what is more natural than the conclusion: that there is a world, and consequently a Creator. We perceive the effect, and must acknowledge the cause. To me this is very clear; and if you will not grant that, you must, however, at least confess that we have more proofs for, than against the existence of a God! And if this is the case, acknowledge then with humility the limits of our reason, which we cannot go beyond,

yond, without irrecoverably bewildering ourselves; and adore that which you cannot comprehend."

During this discourse the night had come on. The Heavens were serene, and illuminated with sparkling stars. The Bishop opened the window, and led the Prince to it.

"Behold!" said he, "the immeasurable expanse, in which are myriads of worlds, that our eye is not able to reach. Adore him whom you are not able to comprehend!"

The Prince sunk upon his knees, and the Bishop with him.

"Yes, here in the dust do I adore thee, oh Eternal God! Oh pardon, pardon the weakness of thy feeble creature! Thou universe, and ye innumerable worlds, proclaim to me that there is a God, our Creator! Yes, thou art! thou art! thou art!"

To this scene, which never will be erased from my memory, there succeeded a long pause. No sound of prayer was perceptible; but it was sufficiently evident, from the countenance of the supplicants, that no words could express their feelings, which could only be intelligible to him who knows our thoughts even before they exist.

LETTER XI.

JOHNSON TO LORD SEYMOUR.

December the 2d.

IT is true, that for this time, my letter will reach you a considerable time later than formerly. I had no subject to write upon; all is in a *statu quo*. The Bishop visits the Prince, and the Prince returns his visit; their fondness for each other increases daily. But it is very singular to me, that the Prince should find it so difficult to pursue the right road. He is now in the extreme, and it wants very little to make him a bigotted fanatic. Whilst he acknowledges the principal truths of our religion, other ideas have again associated themselves, which, perhaps, prejudice and education have cemented to his soul, and render it, for that reason, more difficult for him to get the better of them. The Bishop is not at all pleased with that; but what can he do?

He is afraid to root out the wheat with the weeds, and seems only to wait for a certain time, when he has nothing more to fear from that; and the Prince is convinced of the truth. To work there is nothing left untried.

The Prince has got acquainted, through the Bishop, with several Priests, but principally with one Sebastian, who has shewn a great affection for him, and is his perpetual companion. No wonder that he is very often with us, for the Prince—(who has already reposed an unlimited confidence in the Bishop) looks upon this favourite in a very high light. Thus much is certain, that this Sebastian is a man of the world; but that he
is

is possessed of the goodness of heart which characterizes the Bishop, I have my doubts. The hypocrite appears in his countenance, although he knows how to hide it. That the Bishop does not suspect him, proves nothing in favour of him that will subvert my opinion; for, it is well known, that the best of hearts are frequently the easiest to be imposed upon.

The Bishop has indeed great skill in finding out the character of a man; but he did not see this Sebastian behind the scenes, as I did; they think nothing of him, and, on that account, do not suspect him. What confirms the truth of my former assertion, is, that Sebastian encourages the Prince in his fanatical manner of thinking; he acts thus before him; but, when the Bishop is present, he displays again the man of science, who only is satisfied with the marrow, and throws away the bones. But with what skill he contrives all this you must judge for yourself. It is singular that the Prince did not discover any thing in him, although he is not quite blind in such cases. Yet I will, for the present, suspend my judgment. Perhaps I may have been mistaken. Since I have known the Bishop, I have quite another opinion of some of the priests here.

The Armenian and his companions have not made the least noise, and the Prince, desirous of hearing something certain about him, becomes daily more and more impatient; for, these words, "Thou shalt know him nearer, if thy obedience makes thee worthy of it." And also the history of Civitella still perplexes him.

The Prince cannot speak to the Cardinal; for his illness has rather increased than lessened. To avoid any thing that might remind him of his nephew, he is gone to his estate in the country.

December

December the 4th.

HOW shall I relate to you a piece of news which causes the greatest sorrow? God of heaven! Must every thing that is good and virtuous fall to the ground?

I was obliged to recover the shock I received before I could continue writing. The Bishop is dead! To-day we receive the terrible news. He had an epileptic fit. All lament his death; but the Prince is inconsolable. Alas! he has suffered a great loss! He was here last night, with several other priests and father Sebastian. He entertained the society till late at night, with the vivacity of his conversation, and was so well pleased with his visit that he neglected going to rest at his usual hour, which he seldom missed.

Before he went home, he complained of the head-ach; but, he observed also, that he had such attacks very often, and no person thought that they were the forerunners of bad consequences.—He is no more.

If ever you shed tears for a good man, sacrifice one to the memory of him!—In him the Prince—alas! not the Prince only; in him the world has suffered an irreparable loss! He was the firm supporter of humanity.

I never spoke to him; I only saw his actions; but, from those, I cannot think any man ever was more worthy of esteem than he was.

If saints are worshipped, he certainly ought to occupy the highest place among them, for, although he neglected the scourge, he fulfilled the will of God—

I have just left the Prince. He weeps for him!—Sorrow sometimes becomes a pleasure.—He had a great desire to see the corpse of his beloved friend once

once more ; but he was not admitted. They said that they had forwarded it immediately, according to his last will, to **mo, as soon as they were sure of his being dead ; for he desired to rest near the remains of his friends—I hope this is true, and that he was not sacrificed to malice ! The sudden removal of the corpse certainly makes this somewhat probable.

I was in the Prince's room when father Sebastian came with a sealed parcel.

"Here is something for you, from our deceased friend ; perhaps it contains his last will, which he trusts to your care. I saw it in his writing desk, before they found him dead. The direction struck me, and the addition upon it, to deliver it to you immediately after his death, may excuse this sudden step which I have taken, for having brought it to you without the knowledge of any other person."

Tears almost made the words of Sebastian unintelligible. Oh ! I certainly have wronged him ; for he seriously bewails the death of the Bishop !—But it may be dissimulation.

The Prince thanked him. He opened the parcel immediately, and run over its contents hastily, which seemed to make a deep impression on him. He communicated nothing to the priest, and locked himself up in his room, as soon as he was gone.

I could not learn any thing about it ; but I feel so much interested in it, that I shall not think it dishonourable to open the writing desk of the Prince, as soon as an opportunity offers. Perhaps we may obtain a key to many other things.

I shall, in this instance, make some extracts, by which means you will be able to judge for yourself. I wished long ago to do so, but found no opportunity.

The parcel must contain intelligence of great consequence

consequence. The Prince is still engaged in perusing it, and has given orders for us to suffer no person to enter his room. His countenance is very serious and gloomy ; his eyes seem to express astonishment and rage ; his sorrows, which the death of the Bishop had occasioned, appear to be forgotten. My curiosity is raised to the highest pitch, and I can scarcely wait for the best time to satisfy myself and you.

LETTER XII.

JOHNSON TO LORD SEYMOUR.

December the 9th.

ARM yourself, friend, to hear things which will astonish you. My conjectures have not deceived me. The parcel contains things of the greatest consequence. The whole of last night I spent in reading it through, at the greatest hazard of being discovered. The Prince does not go out so generally as he did, but receives his visitors in his hotel. And, if that did not happen, I was prevented by other circumstances from pursuing my plan. Last night he went to-bed very early, and I ventured to creep into his room, although some of his people sleep under it. With the greatest care I opened the writing-desk, and took out the parcel. The contents I here communicate to you.

“ PRINCE !

“ My death unravels a history which I was obliged to conceal from you, during my life time, to continue unknown. It was my only wish to live in obscurity, for I could not expect ever to obtain the sovereignty : listen then to my history from the beginning to the end. I am a . . . Prince, and the eldest brother of the present regent . . . — I would not discover myself to you, fearful that I might inflame you to unseasonable revenge, and by that means deprive myself of my quietude. As soon as my duty called me to your assistance, my heart willingly accorded with

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the invitation, and it cost me a desperate struggle to obtain that fortitude, which was required, not to press you, my nephew, immediately to my heart; and, I am confident, you must have perceived my embarrassment at our first interview, which arose from the same cause. I thought it prudent to act thus, as I wished to go down in peace to my grave, because I was not sure that in discovering myself to you, you might, perhaps, have unintentionally betrayed me. The following history will convince you that I am your near relation.

" I was heir to the crown, and of my three other brothers there remains only the present ***, and your uncle. Your father is no more; he was the dearest to me, and I shall probably meet him again in a better world, after a long separation. Between me and the present **** there existed, from our infancy, a rooted dislike to each other, which originated from our being such opposite characters. As he advanced in years his enmity became worse; for he easily perceived, that I was superior to him in rank, and that the crown was my inheritance. His ambition made the first intolerable to him, and, in the last, he was actuated by the impolitic desire of an absolute authority. He sought as much as possible to avoid my society, and treated me with that ceremony which is invented and practised only by those who regard not the tender ties of relationship. He never called me brother, and the more I endeavoured to win his affection by my good conduct, the more he absented himself from me. Nature had endowed me with superior talents, which caused my parents, and the other parts of the family, to love me sincerely, and which increased his hatred.—On the contrary, your father was so much the more

attached

attached to me, and God grant that you may enjoy that happiness, which his brotherly love gave me. My father was very feeble, and gradually declined in his health. He had a great desire to see me married in his life, to witness, perhaps an offspring. How was it possible for me not to fulfil the will of a father, who only entreated where he could have commanded. The convention pointed out to me a spouse from the **d*** house, and it was a pleasant circumstance to me, that I had three sisters to choose from. I did not hesitate which to accept. I pitched upon Amelia, who although not so beautiful as her sisters, yet far surpassed them in liveliness and temper. Though my hairs have long been whitened by age, yet whilst I write this I shed tears of joy, sacred to the day when she swore eternal love to me at the altar.— When the ceremony was concluded, I conducted my spouse as the hereditary princess, to my father's house. She loved me, not as royal consort, to whom the homage of a court was due, but one whom she could press tenderly to her heart as her husband and friend. I was the happiest man in the world—I seldom quitted the society of my Amelia; she was all to me. Such perfect domestic happiness as we enjoyed few princes can boast of. Our mutual love and happiness was every where spoken of with veneration. Before a year was elapsed, she was brought to-bed of a boy, and the country celebrated this event with great splendor. She nourished him at her breast, and delighted to see him walk in leading strings. It was firmly resolved not to trust the child in the hands of hirelings, but to educate him ourselves. Alas! my happiness was too great to last long—I was soon dashed from its pinnacle. My father engaged in the war which broke out with the enemies

mies of his allies, the *** d***. My duty called me into the field. The love I bore your father, who had already suffered much from the enemy, overcame the anxieties of my beloved spouse.— She dismissed me with fortitude, without a tear, yet she could not conceal the emotions of her soul, when she thought we might never meet again. Her last prayer was for my safety. I mounted my horse. The sound of drums and trumpets chased every weak sensation from my mind, and, courageously, I led my soldiers to the field of battle. They were all well disciplined, and I had their confidence and love: what could I hope otherwise than to return home victorious? My first plans succeeded. From two battles I returned a conqueror, and the enemy began already to fear my superiority. One effort more was to be made upon the fortress of ***, and which, if I succeeded in taking, all would be completed. The evening before the battle, I encouraged my soldiers, and all swore either to be victorious or to die. At the break of day, we marched to meet the enemy, and formed a line of battle in a place well situated for the purpose. My men fought like lions, and the enemy behaved with equal gallantry. They were well aware how much they were interested in the event, and victory remained long undecided. At last it proved in favour of us. The enemy began to yield, and I commanded the heavy cavalry to charge sword in hand. I headed my people, which inflamed them with new courage. A ball which struck me upon my head, caused me to fall from my horse, and four months I lingered without my senses.— When I came to myself I found that I was in the hands of my enemies. They had discovered me naked upon the field of battle; and, when they saw

saw signs of life in me, I was carried with the wounded to the hospital. The contusion in my head was very dangerous; they were obliged to trepan me; and, after the accounts which they gave me, as to the manner that they proceeded, it is almost incredible how I escaped with my life. Alas! better had it been that I had died, for the sorrows which I was doomed to suffer, were almost too much for me to bear, and I am not able to comprehend how I survived them. My first inquiries were after my father and my wife: alas! oh God! what did I hear? As soon as I fell from my horse, the courage of my men failed them, and, the enemy taking advantage of their confusion, made a fierce attack, and gained with ease a compleat victory. This unhappy news caused my father's death, and my wife soon followed him. My little son also died a few weeks after. My eldest brother had usurped the reins of government in the name of my child, who was not old enough, and he was proclaimed regent of *** with the greatest splendor. What I felt by this information no words can express. I had lost all! I thought it not proper to make myself known; and, when I was entirely restored, they dismissed me without ransom, and many of the officers there made me rich presents. I would not venture to wait upon my brother, though he seemed to me very friendly, during the war, in which he also had assisted. It was as if a secret power destined me for destruction. How could I be an agreeable guest, as my existence must necessarily deprive him of the crown, and I could not expect any mercy from him in that case, as he always hated me; and the love which he showed me during the campaign displayed only his hypocrisy, as I could easily perceive. I went to

to my father-in-law ; but I was a long time before I could speak to him, for, in my dress they would not suffer me to approach him, and I was not willing to discover myself to any body but to him. At last I succeeded in obtaining a hearing, whilst he was walking to his carriage at a country seat, for which opportunity I was obliged to wait for more than four hours ; but the issue of it was not what I expected. Illness and sorrow had quite disfigured me—he thought me an impostor ; and I ought to thank God that I was not dragged to a dungeon. I mentioned to him every trifling circumstance, even when I courted his daughter ; but it was of no use. The clearest proof to the contrary was, that they had found my corpse upon the field of battle ; that my wife and brothers had acknowledged it to be such, and that it was buried in the vault of my ancestors, and that they still mourned my death. To recover my lost crown seemed to me impossible. My second brother, on whom I rested my hopes, was upon his travels, I made myself easy in my situation, and thought it infinitely better to do so, than to try to ascend the throne by the blood of my fellow creatures, even if it were possible for me to find a power to assist me, since success in the attempt would not have been any recompence to me, for that which I had lost. I bought with the money that I was possessed of, a guittar, entirely reconciled myself to my fate ; and, without having any plan for the future, I travelled from place to place, and earned my bread at the doors of wealthy people. This manner of life perfectly agreed with my situation, for, as every thing in the world had become indifferent to me, I found it welcome to me. I happened one day to pass through a village on the borders of ***. As it began to grow dark when I arrived, I resolved

I resolved to pass the night there. It was on a Sunday; and I was entreated by the guests of the ale-house to entertain them with my guittar. I began, and sang a romance which I had composed myself from my own history, but which could not easily be discovered, because it treated of a Prince who was in the power of malevolent fairies. I used to sing it better than any other, for it was my favourite song, as my sensations could be more strongly expressed by it, and without betraying myself; for who would have suspected in my person the hereditary Prince of *****, whom they concluded was no more. I felt a particular sorrow so long as I travelled in my native country, when the bells rang for my death§, and which had already announced that my Amelia was no more—alas! could I but have recovered her again, how willingly would I have renounced all claims to the diadem and purple robes. The tolling of bells brought her loss fresh to my mind, and it was as if my heart was severed by a two-edged sword. I was attentive to my guittar, and saw not what was going forwards about me. I had finished. The country people were all sitting round me, and almost lost in astonishment. The landlord an invalid, with a wooden leg, stood before me in a soldier's dress, and surveyed me narrowly; I thought his countenance was familiar to me. ‘Fetch the best that you have in your house, mother,’ he exclaimed, “and put it before the guittar-man.” He came nearer to me, and said—‘Perhaps you do not know what a happy day this is to me; your song is a faithful representati-

§ It is a custom in Germany, whenever a Prince dies to ring the passing-bell every evening for a certain period;

on of the fate of our hereditary prince?' He took off his cap. I became anxious. 'I served under him, and was in the same engagement, when he lost his life and I my leg. I would willingly have died in his stead! The rascal who shot him!—but we dare not speak what we know; if he was alive, it would be better for our country.' 'Yes,' said the countryman, and praised me so much, that I was scarcely able to maintain my character.—' You see,' said the landlord, ' that I am clothed in my regimentals! It is my birth-day, and it is then only, and on great festivals, that I put them on. Let us be merry!—Indeed it would be better for us, if our happy hereditary Prince was living! I have many times stood near to him, and have conversed with him!' He wiped a tear from his eye, and I was obliged to turn from him. I knew but too well who the landlord was. He had served in the guard, and was very well known to me.—' You should have seen him,' he continued. ' If I described him to you, I should say he looked exactly like this guittar-man, only he was handsomer; his height was the same. We ought not to make such a comparison; but an hereditary Prince is made of the same materials as a guittar-man, and the difference consists only in this, that the Almighty gave the one a sceptre and the other a guittar.'—He once more looked at me. ' Yes exactly his features! He appeared so the moment I saw him.' He took a full bumper, ' To the memory of our hereditary Prince!' he exclaimed—and all followed his example. I was anxious not to be known, and began immediately to play a lively tune, to turn the attention of the people to another object. I succeeded, but not with the wish of the landlord; he remained thoughtful. The countrymen at last dispersed, and the landlord took me aside.—

He

He spoke to me bare headed. ‘ You are our gracious Prince. I know you well ! ’ I affected to laugh, and answered ‘ He is dead ; yourself said so ! ’ ‘ I said so, but I thought otherwise.— No one will suppose that I am in possession of a secret, which is known to very few. You may tell me who you are. Do not think that I will betray you. I had an idea, that you might still be alive ; and, as I read in the newspapers, that at *d**, somebody had given himself out to be the hereditary prince of ***, I became more sure of it ; and, when I saw you, I knew you so well that I was confident I was not mistaken. Speech and every thing else agrees. Our hereditary Prince played also upon the guittar, and sung well. I have many times listened to his music, when I stood sentinel before his tent, in the last campaign, and I crept very often behind his tent to hear him play. However, it never would have come into my mind to seek in your person the Prince, did not I know what to do, and had not your conduct betrayed you ; as I told the countrymen, that between you and the hereditary Prince there was the greatest similarity.’ He seized my hand with affection. ‘ Oh ! let me hear it from your own mouth, although I am confident that you are our gracious hereditary Prince ! ’ I could no longer maintain my disguise. I discovered myself to him. His prudent conduct in the presence of the countrymen, when he knew me, was a sufficient proof of his integrity ; and from him I learnt things which made my hair stand upright, and taught me to avoid in future, more carefully my native country. ‘ Do you know,’ continued he, ‘ from whom the ball came that dismounted you ? From one of your own soldiers. When you fell, another ball also killed my comrade, and I, at the

same time, lost my leg. I fell near him. I was lying there in the most excruciating pain. When the tumult of the battle ceased; his piercing shrieks brought me to my senses; and I had power and sense enough left to bind up my wound as well as I possibly could. He now perceived that I was still alive. Kill me brother, do me that favour! he exclaimed—No, do not kill me, I am not worthy of such mercy! I deserve the dreadful torments I endure—for I have murdered our hereditary Prince! The cursed money of his brother tempted me to commit that horrid deed. Now hell drags me down! He died uttering the most frightful curses. So much deliberate villainy I did not expect from my brother, but I experienced pangs still more terrible. As they could not find my body upon the field of battle, they took from the spot that of another person who resembled me, and by disfiguring his face produced it as my corpse.—But my inhuman brother was not yet satisfied.—He poisoned my spouse and little son, and I will not presume to say with certainty, that he did not send out of the world by that means, my father.—God will judge him—I leave it to his conscience. I remained at the invalids several days, I obliged him to promise me an eternal silence of what he knew, and continued my journey. At J—— I was taken ill with a bad fever, and I found a home in the convent * * *, where they took great care of me. One day I was laying almost exhausted after a fit, when, raising my eyes, I saw a monk sitting upon my bed, who seemed to take particular care of me. I looked at him, and beheld Father Lorenzo, who was formerly in the convent —, which I visited very often, on account of its romantic situation, and his society which I preferred to that of all the other priests.—The good monk knew me immediately; and as he

he feared I might betray myself during the delirium; he had taken the trouble to watch me himself. I commended his precaution, and thanked God that he had sent me a friend at so critical a period, to whom I could entrust the secret of my misfortunes. From that time the monk Lorenzo was my constant companion. At last I recovered, and felt an unconquerable desire to remain in the convent. I had already got acquainted with many good friends there, and I could not bear to separate from them, I was also tired of wandering about. Is it possible, I exclaimed, to choose a more noble way of living, than that of studying the welfare of men? And now my resolution was firm, to enter as one of their order. I was obliged to become a Roman Catholic, but who can blame me for that? Does not God know the heart?—And where can we find amongst the supporters of our religion, such conduct as amongst the Catholics?—They are, blamed for intolerance. Do they enquire what we believe before they do a good action?—Never! They give to him who wants, without respect or preference. Where is there a doctrine which is taught by the Catholic church, which does not agree with the purest principles of morality?—That monks sometimes abuse, it must not be denied, and which cannot often be said of the protestants. However, I will not defend a step that my conscience never reproached me for, and for which I never was sorry, but always found it beneficial to me. I expect the approaching hour when my Creator will call me to an account for all my actions, and I do not tremble at it. He will not ask, what did you believe?—But, how didst thou act?—And what religion is most desired by good monks?—Is it not that which

embraced. I spent a number of happy years in that convent—I care not what is said against them. I found this opinion confirmed, that an unhappy being cannot chuse a better refuge from his misfortunes, than the tranquil scenes of a cloister.—I never should have left it, if I had not been obliged to do so by necessity. Heaven knows that my brother, found out the place of retirement. Father Lorenzo discovered a brother in our convent, who aimed at my life, and he confessed that he was hired to do so by one of my brother officers. To prevent the execution of the diabolical design, I left the convent—and my separation cost me many tears—I travelled over *z**. An account, that I was still alive, had also spread there, and me particularly anxious for fear I should be discovered. The discovery happened. But it was made by a friend, who became my support in that trying hour—This was the Governor of **** who was some time in the service of our court.—By his intercession I obtained the Bishoprick of *** and as much as I struggled against it, I was obliged to accept it. But in that situation I was not safe from the revenge of my brother; and he trusted me less, as I was in a better situation to do him material injury than when I lived an harmless monk in the convent of ****. Some narrow escapes, made me anxious, and at last obliged me to take up my abode here, and I found the doge of ****, a great protector. By his influence, I also obtained permission to preach at St. Mark's church, which suited my wishes and inclinations. I had many enemies amongst the clergy in this place, because I did not always follow their example; but I suffered all very patiently, and thanked God, that this was not owing to the ill will of my brother,

Brother, whom I was willing not to curse in my heart. With the relation of my misfortunes I could fill a folio volume; but this is enough, my son, to instruct you in my history, and to procure me after my death a tear from my nearest relation. A certain presumption tells me: I shall not live long, and in that case I recommend to you, the priest Sebastian. You may safely follow his advice; for I have tried him and found him sincere. Let him finish the work of your conversion, which I have begun. He is wise, and unblemished in word and deed. My blessing attend you in every undertaking. Farewell."

" L. R**; formerly

" Hereditary Prince of ****.

" Well, friend, what do you say to this?

The history itself appears to me false. I cannot help suspecting that it leads to the execution of a certain scheme.

It is very true that the deceased Bishop was a German, though no person was acquainted with his real history, and whenever the Prince spoke of it, he turned the conversation to some other subject. Every thing has such a romantic air, that although I know too well that in the Prince's family there are hidden some secrets which no biographer can disclose; yet, I cannot give credit to the Bishop's history.

The Prince is fully convinced of the truth of the whole history. I was present at a conference, which he had with Sebastian, upon the subject.

He thinks the Bishop was his uncle, and that his hand-writing proves the fact. " On that account my grandfather died so suddenly, and the daughter-in-law

in-law and nephew followed him!" exclaimed he, with a terrible voice, and swore to be revenged upon the assassin.

Sebastian joined with him in his resolution, and made this observation: that it appeared clear, that Heaven had selected him for the holy task of punishing such a horrible crime.

LETTER XIII.

JOHNSON TO LORD SEYMOUR.

December.

THE good Baron F***** is poisoned, by the command of the Prince. This is the recompense for his faithful attachment.—Oh God!!! The Prince is already so far gone, that he suffers his people to be assassinated clandestinely!—I have heard it positively asserted that he ordered it to be done; and Biondello was so quick in the execution, that I could not prevent it. They accused the good F*** of having written letters to ***, in which he had calumniated the Prince. The Count O**** also it was said, was a party concerned. Oh! ye good people! Ye interest yourselves too much for an unworthy man! It is probable, that the Baron has written something to **** that the Prince dislikes, but does he deserve to be assassinated for it? It is too common in this country.—But ought not the Prince rather to thank him for it?—He certainly did it with no other view, than that the Prince might leave Venice, and extricate himself from a labyrinth, in which he will be more and more entangled. That this man could not have been actuated by bad motives, I will stake my life, and all my hopes of eternal happiness.

Several days later.

AND yet friend, how miserably am I deceived in my opinion of mankind. The Baron F*** and the Count O**** cannot be those honest persons we had supposed them; yet I must say this,

this, that in their excuse, they have too much interested themselves in the Prince's welfare.

I have been again to the Prince's writing-desk, and seen all the letters from the Baron F*** to the Count O**, and also several of the last, which Biendello, probably had intercepted, according to his orders. I judge more favourably of the Prince's rash proceedings, yet I will not defend him; for the letters are written in such terms that one would scarcely suspect the greatest villain of being the author, and what is still more terrible, it appears very clear from their contents, that the Baron F... poisoned the Prince's Greek lady, by command of the court.

But they should have first heard the Baron in his defence. Perhaps he still may be innocent; for he was very much attached to the Prince, and in all his actions, seemed a man of integrity. I can hardly persuade myself, that he could be the villain which is required to commit such deeds; to calumniate his master, and poison an innocent lady, who, according to the description of all that knew her, was an angel. I am perplexed in the extreme! I was prevented writing farther upon this business by a strange event.

A man entered my room, and desired, in a very noisy way, to be shewn immediately to my master. From his countenance I saw he was desperate: he looked wild and in trouble. I must confess that his appearance alarmed me. At the moment I felt embarrassed, I knew not how to address him. Observing that I hesitated, he repeated his demand once more, with terrible threats. Anxious to know the purport of his visit, I attended the fellow to the Prince. As soon as he saw him, he rushed upon him, and drew a dagger from his bosom,

bosom, which he presented to the Prince, who quickly retired into a corner of the room, and, drawing his sword, held it before the villain.—“ This dagger was destined for you, Prince !” he exclaimed, gnashing his teeth.

The attendants seized the assassin, and disarmed him.

“ That is unnecessary,” said he, and struggled to disengage himself.

“ Had I been such an outcast, as to have assassinated my gracious master, I should, indeed, have chosen an hour when no person could have prevented me.”

The Prince, who had now recovered himself from his fright, approached him, and discovered him to be his servant, whom he had lost about a year ago†. His astonishment was very great, to find his man, whom he had despairs of ever seeing again, in such a peculiar situation.

“ And you could determine to murder your master, you whom I always looked upon as one of my most faithful servants !”—

“ And I am still so, as God the Almighty is my witness, gracious Prince,” he replied, “ else this my dagger would have pierced your heart, for it would have procured me a thousand zechins—a handsome reward, indeed, for the life of a Prince !”—

“ Who could offer so much for my life ?”—
(Laughing furiously.)

“ Your uncle, his Serene Highness.”—

“ Does he wish to assassinate me also ?—He should have chosen some other person to have executed this honourable deed ; for he must have well

† See the first volume.

known that he not found his man in you! This was stupidly managed. One villain always supposes another person to be the same."—

" Pardon me, great Prince, for speaking thus openly—but it is the truth. And do you think that this is the first attempt that has been made upon your life?—Already seventeen assassins have been hired; but they never were able to come at you. When they thought that they had you in their power, it always happened that you were snatched from them. They cursed their fortune, and said, that the fault was not theirs; that a person, (I do not know what they call him, and who always goes about in different disguises) had prevented the execution of their design, because he took you under his protection,"—

" Ah! the Armenian!" said the Prince, astonished.

" They would not leave this work any longer to the care of the banditti, but chose me for the purpose. I thanked them for this honourable trust.—I was ordered to return again to your secretary, to say that I had been detained in the cloister by the monks, to regain your confidence, and then to assassinate you privately when you expected no danger, and were alone and unarmed. On the deed being done, I was to fly to the convent, and to be received under its protection."

" Stupid scheme; pity that it was not more successful;—but where have you been all this time?"—

" I have been out of Venice, but have been shut up in a small room, where I could neither see sun or moon."—

" But how could you receive messages from me?"

" In

" In the easiest way in the world, even by means of those people from *****, who had taken and confined me. I regularly went to a cloister in the Guidecca, and performed my devotions; which was very agreeable to me; for the father who governed it, did every thing to please me, and had almost succeeded in making me a Catholic. Do not be angry, great Prince, for he possessed such powers of persuasion, that he obliged me to believe whatever he said. I often reprobated myself for my apostacy; but I changed my mind again as soon as I got to the cloister!

" He was not like most Venetians, difficult of access, but, on the contrary, very communicative —and, from the first time I saw him, I desired so much to see him again, that I sought him of my own accord the day following. Many of the other brethren behaved very civilly to me, and I could not help preferring their agreeable society to any other. There was always something new, and my curiosity was so much excited, that I could with difficulty wait the return of their visit. Their intention was, very likely, to convert me to their faith, for what otherwise could they see in me deserving of so much trouble? And, perhaps, this was not difficult to accomplish, for they represented every thing in so peaceable and lovely a manner. And I really frequented the places of worship with infinite pleasure. They were always curious, and wished to hear news of you, gracious Sir;—but, when I told them I was ignorant, or that I dare not blab, they were then satisfied, and praised my fidelity. What they might safely know I told them, but not one syllable more—and we remained, by this means, the best friends. One day as I was going to them, after they had been

paying:

paying a visit, from which they returned rather late, it was already dusk, and I was not far from the cloister, when three fellows surrounded me, bound my hands and feet, and forced me away blindfolded. They carried me into a small dark room, and left me to myself. I had not long been there, when Colonel **ch came to me ; he endeavoured to extort news of you, which I either did not know, or at least pretended to be ignorant of. He took all possible trouble to get something out of me, and, when fair means did not succeed, had recourse to severity. You cannot believe, gracious Prince, what questions they put to me ; it was all unintelligible to me. They attributed to you what you never performed ; and every step you took, and every thing you did, was misrepresented in the most shameful manner."—

" Had I even then spies about me," exclaimed the Prince ? " I must confess, this exceeds all my expectations."—

" The Colonel **, and several other officers who had long practised without effect upon me, and who I knew very well to have been here a long time in secret, for eight or nine months never came near me, as they well knew that all their threats were in vain. Some days after this time the Colonel paid me another visit. I wastired of living so long upon bread and water, and therefore pretended to be very obedient, and immediately the proposal was made to me of murdering you. I accepted the offer, because I feared they might procure some other person, who would execute this order in earnest. What remains you are already acquainted with."

The Prince took this man again into his service, and gave orders for apprehending these pretended officers.

officers. It always appeared wonderful to me that he never could gain any information respecting them. How the Prince was affected by this act of his court ; you may easily conceive : he vowed death and destruction to it. It is fortunate, that he has it not in his power to execute it ; for he would, perhaps, keep his word ; but it is otherwise ordered. Indeed it is natural to expect, that he who permitted Count F ** to be murdered without a hearing, would easily consent to having his uncle privately assassinated : he might even think he had a right to do it, as a just revenge, and consider it a praise-worthy action. And although he was never influenced by secret revenge, his passions here interfered ; and, it appears to me, as if he only opposed them to become the more furious. It might also happen that the assistance he expected from the King of * * * * could not be granted.

Stroke upon stroke ; this instant the Prince has learnt, that the Bishop of * * * * has been taken off by poison, and at the instigation of the Count of * * *. The perpetrators of this deed have been taken and confessed every thing.

The Prince himself has spoken to them, and every thing has been again confirmed. This is too bad, and were it possible to suspect a trick, I should be apt to think (as every thing seems to accord with the idea) that it had been done on purpose to inflame the rage of the Prince against * * *. But who could be interested in this ?—The whole is to me unaccountable. If the anger of the Prince could have been increased, it would certainly have been so by this intelligence, but it was already at the highest. For a long time he spoke not a word, but his breast boiled with rage.

“ Murderers

" Murderers of my father, and brother; murderers of all my friends!" at last he exclaimed, with furious action; " God's dreadful vengeance shall at last fall upon you, through me, and then woe to you."

I hope it will be forgotton by him, for the most violent passions always last the shortest time; but so soon as we perceive he is about undertaking any dangerous business, we must then have recourse to the last extremity, and lay the whole affair before **, **; for it appears to me, in spite of all the improbabilities by which it is attended, nothing more than a concerted trick — And may not this be attributed to the old man that I overheard talking to Biondello; and does it not appear to be agreeable to his whole plan? — I do not know myself what to think of it.

Will it be impossible for you to find out these officers? — Perhaps they would be able to give you information upon many things!

A day later.

THE Armenian is at work again; Sebastian came to the Prince to-day earlier than usual. His countenance announced something remarkable: — he approached the Prince silently, and gave him the following note:

" PRINCE,

" I have always recommended to you patience and submission. If you are desirous of acquiring my nearer acquaintance, or if you wish to arrive at that pinnacle of power which you can attain through me, I now require a proof of both. I am

am not a stranger to the resolution you have taken, to be revenged. You must no longer indulge the thought, or, at least, not upon any account, execute it. It will be a proof of your prudence and patience. Mark this—that often is a crime which, at another time and under different circumstances, may be an act of justice. You will convince me of your sincerity, if, before the end of seven days, you become a member of the only true and happy church. I know this has been long your intention; but proceed to fulfil it. The reasons for your doing this I cannot now explain; but they will in time unfold themselves.

“ Your invisible conductor

“ Through all places.”

“ From the Armenian!” exclaimed the Prince, after he had read the letter, with attention and a kind of awe, “ how did you know him?”—

“ He appeared to me in my apartment, and gave me the letter; more I know not,” said Sebastian, at the same time putting his finger upon his mouth, as if he would say, That this business ought not to be spoken of. The Prince understood him and was silent. Here again then the Armenian has been before us; but this time I am disposed to thank him, although the circumstance proved to me that I was mistaken; for now there can be no longer any doubt, but that the Armenian and his associates were innocent of having poisoned the Prince’s friends, for he surely would not thus destroy the effect of his own work.

The Baron F*** is frequently confined to his bed, nevertheless, he now and then creeps about—but death seems to be painted in his countenance. The Prince appears to be a little concerned for him. I observed this in him, and was very happy, because

because it shewed that he had still some regard for him. But he will not consent to an interview, although he seems to be convinced that he has condemned him too rashly. Poor F***! Alas! if he is innocent, the conduct of the Prince towards him will give him even more pain than the poison itself—and I really conclude from his former character, that he is so. But then certainly the letters —It is wonderful that I never could believe any person guilty, that I had not before suspected to be capable of committing a crime—and I could not judge the Baron to be such a villain, altho' I had seen those letters in his own hand-writing.

For appearance sake, the Prince had granted him a physician, in order to conceal the real cause of his illness—but I am afraid this man only makes his case worse; for the Baron, since his attendance, has had many painful paroxysms, which is contrary to the usual effect produced by this poison, which almost imperceptibly consumes the vital powers.

THE COUNT O****'S CONTINUATION OF
THE HISTORY.

THE remaining letters from Johnson were destroyed, for he carelessly left a wax candle burning upon the table, when he went to bed, which when it had burnt out, set the letters on fire; by which means the good Lord would have lost his life, if the smoke in consequence of it, had not waked him in time. The remaining part of this history, I must therefore relate from the account which I had from him.

The letter from the Armenian, had its effect, or rather the Prince had long ago formed the same resolution from the instigation of Sebastian, and the other monks, and this letter hastened its execution. He went over publicly to the Roman church before the expiration of seven days, and all Venice celebrated the day as a great feast.

That it was possible for this event to happen, and that he might have come into the measure willingly, might easily have been expected, from his education, which I observed long before was very bigoted and slavish; and when we take into the account what happened to him afterwards, and which served so completely to eradicate, from his youthful heart the impressions that had been so strongly engraved upon it, we shall conclude the old man had rightly judged when he said that the Prince could not possibly retain his original opinions, after being convinced of their inefficacy, and that he would eagerly catch at a reed to save himself from sinking.—

The Prince's confession of faith, which he made in the presence of so many people, and which

which, by means of Johnson, came into my possession, I can by no means suppress, because I have made it a fixed rule, to relate every thing, that concerns the Prince, and in no particular to deviate from the truth; which would be the case in my opinion, if any thing should be suppressed, which tends to characterize him; but I must previously observe, that the Prince by it, will loose much in the estimation of many of his readers, who will be surprised that he, who was so favoured by nature could consent to acknowledge such nonsense, the greater part of which is contrary to all sound reason, and every moral principle. But I have before said that he fell, and my tears compassionate him, at the same time, that my heart excuses him, because a more than devilish cunning and art had spread the net in which he was ensnared!

Here follows his confession of faith verbatim.

“ I believe and confess, that thro’ the peculiar care of this Christian government, and the active industry and assistance of the holy fathers, I have been entirely brought over from our heretical life and faith, to the true Roman Catholic religion, and only church in which can be obtained salvation; and I do publicly declare to the whole world, that I received this faith freely, and without any compulsion.

I. “ I confess and believe the Pope is Christ’s vicar, and has full power to forgive the sins of all men, according to his own pleasure, to save them,

or

or to thrust them into hell, or excommunicate them.

2. "I confess that the Pope is the supreme head of the church, and that he cannot err.

3. "I confess that whatever novelty the Pope establishes, (whether it be or not in the scriptures) whatever he ordains is the genuine truth, divine, and blessed; and that every inferior person should esteem the same as equal to the commandments of God—

4. "I do confess that the most holy Pope, should be adored by every one with divine honours, and that every one should bow the knee to him as to Christ himself—

5. "I declare, and confess, that the Pope should be honoured by all, in all things, as a most holy father, and moreover that those heretics who live contrary to his ordinances, should not only be exterminated by fire and sword, without exception or mercy, but also that their bodies and souls should be delivered up to hell—

6. "I confess that the reading of the Holy Scriptures is the source of all sects and parties, as also perfect blasphemy.

7. "I confess, that to invoke the deceased saints, to worship the holy fathers, to bow the knee before them, to make pilgrimages to their tombs, to clothe them, to burn lights before them, is godly, holy and useful?

8. "I confess that a priest is much greater than the mother of God, Mary herself, who only bore the Lord Christ, and never conceived again; but a Romish priest offers, and forms the Lord Christ, not only as often as he is willing, but in any manner he will; yea, he feeds upon him while he chews the bread.

9. "I con-

9. " I confess that it is proper to read masses, to give alms, and to pray for the dead.

10. " I confess that the Pope of Rome has power, to alter the scripture, and to augment and to diminish it according to his own pleasure.

11. " I confess that the soul will be purified in purgatory after death, and that its deliverance from thence is partly effected by the sacrifice of the mass offered up by the priest.

12. " I acknowledge that to receive the holy eucharist in one kind is good and salutary—but to receive it in both kinds is heretical and damnable.

13. " I acknowledge that those who receive the holy communion in one kind, enjoy and eat the whole Christ, both body and blood, and also his godhead and his bones.

14. " I acknowledge that there are seven true and effectual sacraments.

15. " I acknowledge that God is honoured by representations of him, and may by means of them be known of men.

16. " I acknowledge that the holy Virgin Mary is queen of Heaven, and governs together with the son, and that according to her will the son is obliged to act in all things.

17. " I acknowledge that the holy Virgin Mary, should be esteemed both by men and angels, higher than Christ, the Son of God himself.

18. " I acknowledge that the bones of the saints, are possessed of great virtues, on which account they ought to be honoured by men, and have chapels built for them.

19. " I acknowledge that the Roman Catholic faith, is unadulterated, godly, saving and true—but that the Protestant, which I of my own accord have

have abjured, is false, erroneous, blasphemous, accursed, heretical, hurtful, seditious, abominable, forged and devised. Since the Roman Catholic religion is, therefore throughout, good and salutary, I curse all those who taught me these abominable heresies in both kinds, I curse my parents who educated me in the heretical faith; and I also curse those who made the Roman Catholic faith dubious and suspicious to me; as also those who gave me to drink of the accursed cup; yes I curse myself, and think myself accursed, because I made myself a partaker of this accursed heretical cup, of which it did not become me to drink.

20. "I acknowledge that the Holy Scripture is imperfect, and is a dead letter, as long as it is not explained by the Pope of Rome, and that the common people ought not to be allowed to read it.

21. "I acknowledge that a requiem sung by a Romish priest is more useful than a hundred sermons; and on that account I curse all those books which I have read, in which that heretical and blasphemous doctrine is contained—I also curse all the works which I read whilst I lived in this heretical faith; wherefore they at the last judgment will not deserve any thing of God*.

" All this I do with my sincere mind confirm, by means of a public retraction of the heretical doctrine, in the presence of the reverend fathers, the learned gentlemen, and the ladies who are present, and the youths and virgins; that the

* What the meaning of this is, I know not. Perhaps something for which God will not reward me."

GERMAN EDITOR.

Roman

Roman Catholic church in these and similar articles is the true one.

" Moreover I promise that I will never more, through my whole life, return to this heretical doctrine of the sacrament in both kinds, although it should be allowable to do so. I also promise, that as long as I have a drop of blood in my body, I will not educate any child of mine, in case I should have any, in that accursed doctrine, nor will consent that it should be educated therein by others, which I herewith promise.

" I also swear that I will help to persecute this accursed heretical doctrine, secretly and openly with words and works, the sword even not excepted.

" Lastly, I swear before God, the angels, and before all the congregation present, that if any alteration should take place, either in church or state, I never will become an apostate from the Roman Catholic, and godly church either from fear or favour, and return again to this accursed heresy, nor will I receive the same.

" As a confirmation of my oath, I at the same time receive the holy communion, and I cause also this my confession, written and subscribed with my own hand, to be preserved in the holy archives of the church*.

" N. N. PRINCE OF *****"

* The Reader, who is unacquainted with the Popish religion, will think many things in this Confession, too highly coloured. But let him believe me, when I most solemnly declare, that I copied the whole verbatim from the manuscript, and that I have not made the smallest addition or alteration.

Note of the German Editor.

To

To this was also added the following Advertisement:

" To all and every one, who see, read, or hear the annexed letter, we declare and testify, that the most illustrious Prince, his Highness N. N. Prince of *****, has this day, namely, the ** day of the month of December 17**, been absolved from all sin and heresy, by the papal power, delivered to us, having before renounced the Lutheran religion, condemned by the Council of Trent, and has publicly made his confession, and adopted the Roman Catholic and only beautifying religion—he hath likewise received from our hands, the holy communion after the manner and form prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church, with a proper veneration and devotion. For the greater security we have signed this with our own hand.

" Given on the **th day of the year
mentioned above.

" N. N. BISHOP OF ****,
AND &c. &c."

The Prince was now a Roman Catholic, and from that day the Armenian was more frequently seen with him than ever. Their interviews grew more frequent, and lasted sometimes for many hours. They were very rarely held at the Prince's house, and when they were, the doors were always carefully fastened, and no person allowed to be present.

This circumstance, together with their always choosing the most secret rooms in the house for those interviews, by which means they prevented all listening, made it utterly impossible for the worthy

worthy Johnson to discover the purpose of these secret meetings. The Prince even carried the key of that room in his pocket, and very often sealed up the door. This, together with Johnson's having sometimes heard an extraordinary noise there, made him conjecture that they must be employed in raising ghosts, which was really the case, as will be confirmed by the conclusion.

How great an ascendancy this Armenian must have had over the Prince, is evident from the circumstance, that without his permission he did not even indulge the most sacred feelings of parental affection, or any which were once most dear to him.

He had, for example, a mother still living, who resided upon a small estate at * * sh, and whom he formerly loved dearly, and used very frequently to correspond with.

He would not answer a letter from her, notwithstanding the bigoted spirit which was prevalent throughout it (and which, as I said before, was peculiar to his whole family) contained such striking marks of maternal anxiety and affection, that no one can read it without being affected by it.

Hitherto there was no opportunity for mentioning his mother, and as this letter is also the surest proof of what I have already said of the Prince's education, and is in my possession, I will insert it here*.

* The reader must not expect to see a letter, which might serve as a model for the epistolary style.

The Count Q*** has taken care to prevent any thing of that kind, by the note at the end of it, and probably no one will blame me for not having given it a more fashionable dress, because it would then have appeared like a picture of one of our ancestors, drawn in the modern stile, in which no one would be able to recognize him.

Note by the Editor.

" MY

“ MY SON !

“ If thou* couldst know the sorrow which I feel, on account of the afflicting news of thy unhappy apostacy from the true religion and knowledge of God for thy salvation ; I do not doubt, that (in case thou hadst not abjured thy ever faithful mother, as well as thy true God) thy dutiful heart would break on reflecting on the numerous tears thou has cost me. Oh, son of affliction to me !—My tears are still my food, both day and night, whilst I, poor mother, must lament and bewail thy loss, not of earthly goods, but of thy eternal happiness, the condemnation of thy miserable soul. I weep with Rachel for my child, and will not be comforted ; because it seemeth to me that he is not.

“ But if all obedience to the fifth commandment, if all filial affection towards thy mother be not extinguished, by the erroneous doctrines which thou hast adopted—Ah ! only listen to me while I address thee, my son, in this letter full of tears !—Oh son, whom I nourished ! attend to me, that God may also attend to thee. I am thy mother, my son, thou art flesh of my flesh. From me thou hast experienced, as thy conscience must tell thee, all the maternal affection, which I promised to thee, and I must certainly seek and desire thy welfare, particularly in things which concern the eternal happiness and salvation of thy soul, which is the most important concern of Christians.

“ Accursed be the mother who, either from a

* In Germany, parents always make use of *thou* and *thee* when addressing their children.

Translator

blind opinion, inconsiderate temerity, or the consideration of temporal advantages, would counsel her child to walk the path which leads to eternal destruction, and the hellish abyss of brimstone. Woe to such a mother!—She might, with perfect justice, be hated (according to the command of Christ, Luke xv. 26.) and never obeyed by any child.

“ My conscience clears me from the suspicion of such terrible conduct, and my heart gives testimony, that I am anxious to snatch my child from the claws of Satan, and lead him to my bleeding Jesus. And, moreover, thy mother entreats thee, dear son, to listen attentively to her, who is now throwing herself at thy feet with thousands of tears, and not to neglect the care which thou should’st take of thy eternal welfare.

“ Do not despise me, my child, on account of the insinuations of thy seducers, that I am a weak woman, who is not able to judge of controversial points in religion. Thou knowest well, my dear child, that the infinite grace of God has caused me to embrace a religion, in which women are allowed, according to the custom of the primitive church, to inquire in the Holy Scriptures, and to seek for eternal life; and even are obliged to learn the mysteries of the faith, in order to gain everlasting salvation; for which faith Saint Paul, in 2 Tim. i. 5. commends Lois and Eunice, the excellent mothers of the holy Timothy. Every just person, whether male or female, ought to live according to his faith. This I have always kept in my mind, and made the word of God the joy and desire of my heart. Thy own conscience will

will convince thee, that according to the true infallible word of God, I have formed my judgment of thy new doctrine. Upon that word, against which even the gates of hell shall not prevail, is my judgment founded, and to that does it appeal; and I declare with a broken heart, Oh thou unhappiest of men ! that thou hast suffered thyself to be seduced to a faith, which will yield thee nothing but condemnation, and the torments of hell. Our divines have already proved this on much more solid grounds, with much greater accuracy, and more fully. I am contented with such evidences, which my Christian soul can learn from its bible.

“ Can that be the true and saving religion, which shuns the holy bible, although that book is the only one in which we can learn the way to eternal salvation, John xx. 31 ; which violently condemns the bible as its decided enemy, and submits not in any thing to its authority, that its fallaciousness and deceptions may not be discovered by it ; a religion which condemns the book which Jesus commanded all men to read, John v. 39, and forbids them to search into it, under the penalty of an eternal curse ? Oh accursed doctrine ! The word which they have despised, shall judge them at the last day according to the sentence pronounced by Christ, John xii. 48.

“ Can that be a holy and blessed doctrine, which disregards the only Mediator of our everlasting happiness ? ”

“ Must thou not confess this thyself, my poor misled child ? Confess to me what thy eyes have seen, and thy ears have heard. What becomes of the cup in receiving the holy communion, which our dying Jesus has so earnestly ordained

and appointed?—Do not they scornfully deride that institution?—Do they not snatch it from the hands of the communicants, and consider it as perfectly unnecessary, in contempt of Jesus?—It appears to me that the Holy Ghost has already pronounced judgment upon those doctrines!—Whosoever shall take away from the words of the book of Jesus, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, Rev. xxii. 19.

“ Hast thou not heard, that man must have lost his salvation, notwithstanding his goods works; wherefore the anguish and blood of the tortured Jesus have been mightily slandered, as if they were not fully sufficient for the salvation of men; but my religion assures me, that we can be saved by the blood of Jesus alone, Acts iv. 12, and that they who hope to save themselves by their works, will receive eternal damnation.

“ Can that be a holy and blessed doctrine, which incites her children to encourage an unlimited idolatry, the invocation of saints, prostrations before pictures, when it is the evident declaration of God himself, that idolaters shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, Rev. xxi. 8.

“ Behold, wretched child!—For I must conclude, and pass over other atrocious errors in silence, because my tears prevent me from writing. Thou hast assented, alas, to such accursed doctrines, whose end is condemnation; and such are the chains of hell, with which the Popish faith enslaves thee!

“ Ah, dear child, as the bible is dear to thee, as the blood of thy Jesus is dear to thee, as Jesus himself, who loved thee so ardently is dear to thee;

free

free thyself from these fetters of the Devil, come forth from this Popish darkness, that thou mayest not be infected with its plagues.

" I conjure thee by thy conscience, confess to me the truth, and the thoughts of thy heart, which will be hereafter disclosed to my omniscient Jesus. Is it not true, that earthly gain hath enticed thee to adopt this faith? But despise all such promises; for what good could it do thee, if thou shouldst gain the whole world, and lose thy own soul?—Dost thou think the greatest riches could be of use to thee, whilst I am obliged to curse thee on account of thy wickedness and abjuration of thy God?—Dost thou not know that a mother's curse is able to destroy the houses and fortunes of her children?

" We Protestants have a just God, who, if we put our trust in him, liberally rewards us; who also, when it is proper, will comfort the wretched, and fill the hungry with good things.

" My maternal heart stands also open thee, my child, and is ready at any time to receive thee.—Have pity then upon thy miserable soul, Oh thou child of my body, whom I have borne next my heart, with great pain, and carefully nourished.—Have pity then on thy poor mother, whom thou wilt otherwise bring down to the grave with sorrow, and return again to the evangelic truth, that I may not live with thee here, but also with thy blessed forefathers in eternal happiness with Jesus.

" On account of which circumstance I wish that my womb had been thy grave, that I might not behold thee in the gloom of hell!

" Return, dear child, to God the heavenly father, by the holy and certain declaration of Christ,

Christ, may forgive thee for the heavy crime which thou hast been guilty of, as well as the apostate Peter; and that I, thy hitherto afflicted mother, may then have reason to cry out with joy:—‘ For my son was dead, and is alive again.’ Luke xv. 24.

“ Oh blessed day! O joyful hour! that shall announce thy return to me. I will therefore day and night implore the goodness of God, and no doubt but God will hear my prayer and attend to my earnest tears; for a woman cannot forget her child, so as not to have pity upon the son of her womb?—I will not forget thee, my son, in all my prayers, who art in danger of losing thy soul*.

“ I remain,

Thy most sincerely affectionate,
But, on account of thy dreadful
Apostacy, thy sighing and bitterly
Weeping mother.”

* sh the —

17**

I must also mention, that a short time before the Prince’s conversion to the Roman Catholic religion, his uncle died, and that he is now hereditary Prince of ***.

* Being very far from approving of many opinions discovered in this letter, I here beg the reader to consider the person who wrote it. He will undoubtedly pardon every harsh expression, when he considers that she laboured under the erroneous idea that no one could be saved who was not of her own persuasion, and that she was obliged to make use of every thing in her power to rescue her son.

*Note by Count O***.*

I must

I must now bring the reader once more to that period, when Lord Seymour found me again in his disguise as shew-man.

Our common endeavours were made for a long while in vain, to learn something more of the Prince, than what we had discovered from Johnson's letters, which was but of little benefit, as the source was locked up from whence the information came. In every letter we received from him (for he knew at present of my being with his Lordship, and my intended plan of saving the Prince) he mentioned that the Prince became every day more thoughtful, and lived quite retired from the world. And that in spite of his endeavours he could not discover the Armenian's object. That the completion of it was near, we easily guessed, and this made us so much the more anxious, for he conducted his operations so clandestinely, that nobody could either discover or conjecture his intention. The before-mentioned hieroglyphical letter was now understood by us more clearly than when we first obtained it, as the Prince was now a Roman Catholic, and stood at the foot of the throne ; but the time when the contents of that letter could be fulfilled, was necessarily that, when he should become Regent of **, which could not be expected so soon.— Besides this, we were fearful that all our presentiments were not well founded—and though there should be a plan of mischief forming, we could not yet know for a certainty whether the Prince, who ought to be the principal person in it, was willing to consent. This prevented us from taking a step which would inevitably have produced bad consequences for the Prince, and which

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we agreed to delay until the danger was greater.—This period arrived but too soon.

One evening when it was very late Lord Seymour came to me. His countenance announced something extraordinary.

“ Friend! ” he exclaimed with astonishment, “ I have news to communicate which you never would have imagined! The Prince has found his Greek Lady, his Theresa! ”

“ You joke,” I replied. “ How is that possible, when she is dead, and Baron F * * himself has seen her dissected—How is that possible? ”

“ This question you must ask the Armenian.—In short she is alive, and every word of the Prince breathes happiness and ecstasy. I saw her come out from the convent—saw how he embraced her, and pressed her to his heart, and heard him in the greatest rapture call her name. In short she is alive, and I discovered it by the strangest accident.”

I was wandering about, and my feet conducted me by the convent * * * :—The history of the Prince made this convent remarkable to me, and I never went by it without giving a free scope to my sensations.

I found the church open and went into it. A solemn tranquillity surrounded me, and my steps were gently echoed in the vaulted aisles. This little circumstance made a still greater impression upon my imagination, and I found myself so unwell that I could not proceed.

A side door, which I never had observed, attracted my eye. I opened it, and discovered a stair-case which led into the vaults of the chapel. I went down and found myself in a spacious cell, surrounded by the dead mouldering in their coffins,

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and which was dimly illuminated by a lamp that was suspended in the middle of the arch by a chain.

Before I could recover my powers of recollection (for I must confess, that, natural as it was to find in such a situation a burial vault, I did not expect it when I stepped down) I heard behind me the rattling of a door, and the echo of some footsteps which seemed to approach. I was afraid of being discovered, and detained for a thief. I retired into a corner where I could see every thing that passed, without being observed, if they did not search the whole vault, and which I did not fear. I had scarcely stood two minutes in the corner, when the door opened, and in came — the Armenian and the Prince. The first was dressed in a long white robe, thrown loosely over his body: there was a solemn but agreeable dignity, and confidential seriousness pictured in his face. He took from under his arm eight torches, and lighted them at the burning lamp. Each of them he moved towards the four walls, and bowed each time. One of them he gave to the Prince, and the other seven he placed around him in a circle. He kneeled in the circle; and then, for a long time, lay speechless and without motion upon his face. At last he arose, and spread out his hands over the burning torches. He drew from out his bosom a bottle in which was a liquid, which he dispersed towards the four corners of heaven, and uttered some words which I could not understand. In the mean time there was heard delightful music, which was at some distance, although it appeared to be near. It seemed to me to be a small organ. However, I must confess, that all these unexpected magical arrangements of the Armenian had a great

effect upon my mind, and threw me into such a situation that I felt more than I can describe.

The Armenian now drew from under his dress a small silver censor, upon which he put something that caused an agreeable odour through the vault.

That the whole was intended to raise some spirit, I expected at the first sight, and I was curious to know how he would succeed, as I did not perceive the least apparatus for his purpose. I must confess to you, dear Count, that I had determined, if it were possible, to interrupt the mountebank-tricks of this Armenian, and under that idea, I always carried about me a brace of pocket pistols. But it did not come to that. He put the censor upon the ground, fell again upon his face, and remained in that situation for some minutes. Having risen again, he repeated the same indistinct words which he had uttered before; and, after a pause, stretched his hand towards a new coffin, and let it fall slowly upon it. Suddenly the lid made a rattling noise, and fell to the ground. The Greek Lady instantly appeared. She was wrapped in white burial linen. Inexpressible serenity beamed in her countenance, and there was not the least appearance of her having been ill. The Prince let fall the torch, which till then he held immovable in his hand, rushed towards her, and clasped her with speechless ecstasy in his arms. I must confess that I was almost petrified by her appearance, and had nearly betrayed myself. This silent pause lasted for a long time, while the beloved pressed each other to their hearts, and an eager kiss renewed their bonds of attachment. They then uttered, with tender emotion, each other's name, and said—Now thou art mine again for ever!

The Armenian remained in his circle of torches, from

from which he had not removed, and delighted himself with the spectacle. He could not, however, conceal his joy at the success of his artifice, and I perceived it struggled with that solemn affected gravity which he sought to maintain.

"Let us not remain longer among the dead," said she, and led the Prince to the door.

"Are you now satisfied with me?" said the Armenian to the Prince, "And will you now willingly fulfil my wish?"

"All, all!" he exclaimed.

They went away, and I immediately crept out of my corner. It was lucky for me that they left the door open, otherwise perhaps you might never have seen me again.

The next morning very early—continued the Count O **, whilst I was lying musing in bed, I heard a knocking at my door, I threw some clothes carelessly over me: and ran to open it. The Armenian came in, and gave me a letter directed to **; and, likewise a considerable sum of money, partly in notes and partly in cash, desiring me at the same time to pursue my journey with the greatest dispatch.

"If you arrive at the place appointed, expeditiously," said he "and deliver this letter into the hands of the proper person, your recompence will be great; but if you fail in the least particular, that may be serviceable in the commission, death is inevitably your lot; though you should hide yourself in any corner of the world."

These were his last words, and he went away.

Had I been the person whom he thought me to be, his conduct could not have failed to accomplish his business, and I should have delivered the letter as he directed for my own interest. But he was scarcely gone, when I bolted the door, and opened

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the letter. It was written in the same hieroglyphical characters as the former, and without waiting to dress myself properly, I ran to communicate to Lord Seymour my acquisition. We both sat down to decypher it. The contents were as follows :

“ The Prince is turned Roman Catholic, and has now consented to every thing. His uncle is no more, and he stands at the next step to the throne. A hint from me, and he is elected. The appointed day for this is the ** of April. Your's must be killed the ** of April, and in the mean time the Prince must be proclaimed King by you. That he will agree to all your proposals and execute them, I once more assure you and answer for his word.

“ The enemy from without, and the citizens are to attack proud Venice at the same time. Surely it must be conquered ! Rejoice ! From its ruins will blossom our happiness, for which we have laboured so many years. But the fruit tastet sweeter which we raise with difficulty, than that which requires no cares.

“ The conspirators at Venice.”

We stood and looked at one another, without being able to utter a word.

“ The danger is now truly imminent,” said Lord Seymour, after a pause, “ and we must discover all to the inquisition of the state, else we shall be deemed equally culpable with these villains.”

Before I could make any answer Johnson rushed into the room.

From him we learned that the Prince, the Armenian, and also Biondello, had already been secured by the officers of the inquisition, and were in close confinement.

Our terror and astonishment, continued the Count ** were indescribable : we remained for a long

long time immovable in the situation in which thi
intelligence had thrown us; and we had a still longer time to stay before we could form any resolution of what we ought to do, not so much to free ourselves from danger, as to make the situation of the Prince more tolerable. As soon they had, in some respect, learnt the dreadful plan which appeared so distinctly by the letter of the Armenian,—the thought that any offence against the Rehablei here, had already been so often severely punished, and that it had been the constant practice of these implacable judges to condemn him to death, who was only suspected to be dangerous to them, even should he have performed the greatest and most distinguished services to the state, struck us with the most dreadful apprehension. All my fortitude forsook me. Lord Seymour, who always in misfortunes retained a coolness of temper, sat mute, and the projecting Johnson kept his eyes fixed upon the ceiling. By the account which our faithful boatman gave us, we learnt that already several noblemen had been imprisoned, and many others had escaped. Our fear was now at the highest. No doubt now remained, that some person must have given them information; and every ray of hope, which confidence inspires, forsook us. Plans were formed and immediately given up, on account of their inconsistency. Johnson took no part in them, but went away without saying a word of what was his intention; and before we had time to interrogate him why he would leave us, he was out of sight. He returned after he had been absent several hours: our door was suddenly opened, and a frightful officer of the inquisition entered. How the mind of a guilty person must sink at the sight of such a man, I could easily judge by my own fears, which

which in spite of my innocence almost overpowered me. I nevertheless recovered myself soon, to which the cool behaviour of Lord Seymour contributed in a great measure.

" An open confession of truth, and intrepidity," said he to me in a whisper, " are useful upon all occasions, and I hope will conduct us safely through this business."

After the officer had looked at us for some minutes, he told us coolly what was his commission; and that we must follow him to the tribunal. This was said without circumlocution, and we endeavoured to determine with ourselves what could be the meaning of this exercise of their power against us. Without a single word being spoken, we arrived at the place of our destination, when we were immediately separated from each other. The room into which they conducted me, excepting the fortifications to prevent the escape of any person, had not the appearance of a prison. Every accommodation was contained in the apartments, and this circumstance served to lessen my fear. That we were confined here on account of the Prince was very evident; but how they had discovered us in our retirement was a matter still to be accounted for. Already several hours had passed, in which I puzzled my brain to find out by what possible means this accident could have happened, when I was summoned to the audience. They looked at me with stern countenances, and required of me the history of my residence in Venice, and exhorted me with calmness to speak the truth faithfully; for they said it would be better for me so to do, as they knew already every thing without my telling it, and that I must not think I could utter a single falsehood undetected. When I had finished

finished my history, in which I concealed not the smallest circumstance, and after I had attested every part, the countenances of the inquisitors seemed to relax. My examination was then read to me, and after I had confirmed every thing therein, I was re-committed to prison.

For several days they confined me under this arrest, during which time, contrary to my expectations, they permitted me to amuse myself with reading. After the expiration of a week they announced to me my freedom, with the condition, that I should continue still at Venice, that I might, if required, undergo another examination.—The circumstances under which Lord Seymour and myself, had been committed were so singular, that I had no doubt, although I had not seen him, but that he would obtain again his liberty,—and I was right, he met me at the door, and we returned arm in arm to our habitation. Johnson came to us and our joy at meeting, notwithstanding our short separation, was as great as if we had not seen each other for some years. The pleasure of having regained our liberty was so sensibly felt by us, that we forgot the Prince and every thing else, and gave ourselves up entirely to excessive joy.—Till then I had always thought that the welfare of the Prince had lain nearer to my heart than my own, but I found that I had deceived myself; for otherwise how could I have become so totally taken up with the first impulse of my joy, when I knew not the least circumstance of his situation? but I will do my heart the justice to say that I should not so easily have given myself up to the natural impulse of my feelings, had I not been full of hope for his safety. All that I had hitherto heard concerning the policy of this place, was descriptive of cruelty,

or,

or, if this word should seem too harsh, of the greatest injustice, insomuch as they did not sufficiently distinguish between the innocent and guilty, and maintained the horrid maxim, that it was better that many innocent people should suffer than that one guilty person should escape.—They conducted themselves however towards me, in a way so different from my ideas of their clemency, that it was not wonderful I should indulge some hope for the Prince, and prefer my own experience to what I had formerly heard, and of which I knew nothing, although my passions persuaded me to believe. I had, besides, without departing from the truth, spoken so much in favour of the Prince, that I did not doubt but it would excite compassion in them for so exalted a character.—Nor could it reasonably be thought that they would be so foolish, as to depart in this instance from their general rules, and execute justice with rigour, particularly as, not being a Venetian Nobleman, his removal would secure the possibility of future danger to them.

After the first emotions were over, we asked Johnson if he had not been in fear for us when he learnt our misfortunes ?

“ Not in the least” said he, smiling, and then he gave us to understand to our great astonishment, that he had been the cause of our being brought before the tribunal.—

“ You !” interrupted Lord Seymour angrily, “ I am very anxious to know the grounds of this singular proceeding.—It was very evident by reason of your anger you did not perhaps perceive it. Do you think that the inquisition would not have came in search of you ? must not the letter from the Armenian, and all the papers found upon the Prince have betrayed you ?

“ But

“ But it is fortunate that it did not happen.—I must add, that I see no excuse for so extraordinary an undertaking, when you could not foresee the good that was to arise from it.”

“ That (I will affirm with the greatest truth) I could always foresee, and, besides, had it come to the worst, the evil never could have been so great, as if we had suffered it to be discovered. They will also be more satisfied if they come at the truth by our examination, than if they suspected we had kept back from making these important discoveries to the state till we were obliged to do it.—And in what an advantageous light will the unfortunate circumstances of the best of Princes be looked upon by such means, and how greatly must our free confession contribute to our excuse, which discovering itself in a multitude of circumstances can not have a different effect? It certainly must dispose them to believe our word in future, when they have found that all our assertions have been so exactly conformable to the truth.”

“ You have calculated upon the future very justly, and I will spare my reproaches; but as you kept up this manœuvre so well, you should at least have given us some intimation of your design; for I must certainly confess (you will excuse me) that you took a great liberty in acting in this manner; and that it was very dangerous to put us so suddenly and unexpectedly into a situation which we could not possibly foresee.”—“ As you speak so candidly, I shall not longer oppose you; but we should have been equally unprovided for the examination, if we had been apprehended. If you recollect, I remarked, a little time before I went out, that in case we should be brought before the tribunal, it would be better for us to adhere faithfully

fully to the truth : And could you desire any further preparation ? Can any danger attend speaking the truth ? Upon this ground I formed my plan, and feigned your consent, because it must end well. — But the principal ground that I went upon, was not to lose any time, for I was instructed early in the morning in what I ought to undertake. This accident would have certainly happened, if we had deliberated any longer, and therefore I thought it most prudent and wise to act as I did."

" Pity," said Lord Seymour, laughing, " that your scheme is not published; it might serve to deprive many an undertaking of its consequences.

This observation which he joined with some friendly jokes, changed our tone suddenly and unexpectedly to a greater degree of happiness; and we delivered ourselves up to the felicity of the present moment, without prying the least into futurity, and without being willing to withdraw the veil which so completely obscured it. How many more happy hours would mankind enjoy if they could always do so.

" But had we not better dress ourselves in our own clothes," said Johnson, " at last?"

I thought it was better to dress again in our proper habits, because if any of the conspirators still remained here, we should be in less danger of being assassinated by them. We concluded upon this to be the wisest plan, and the Lord and Johnson went out immediately to take measures accordingly. They had not been gone above an hour, when a stranger came to me, and, in broken Latin excused the liberty he was taking. I was surprised that he did not make an attempt to find whether I understood the Venetian language. I could not

help

help suspecting that he already knew me, and was acquainted, that, in the part I had undertaken, I had studiously avoided the appearance of understanding the Venetian tongue. And so it was. I learnt soon after he had entreated me not to keep any secret from him, that he was the keeper of the prison of the inquisition of the state, and that the Armenian had sent him with a letter to me for the **, which he requested me with earnest entreaty to deliver immediately. He gave me at the same time every advice, by which I could make my escape, without creating suspicion. Men, he said, did not always escape so well as I had done, after having been cited before the tribunal; and he tried by every assiduous art to make me hasten my departure. I promised every thing, and ordered him to tell the Armenian that it was not in the least my fault, but owing to indisposition that I did not immediately set out, after the receipt of his last letter. After he was gone I opened the letter, and found in hieroglyphics the following account.

" If immediate assistance does not arrive, all is lost.—I, the Prince, and many other conspirators are in prison.—It always appeared to me that this event would take place, and therefore I had beforehand guarded against it: so that nothing can happen of consequence, and no less will be incurred, if our foreign friends are not too tardy. We have long agreed that the information we shall give in this place shall be exactly similar, and it will not be difficult for us to delay the examination for some time longer. While I myself was at the head of this state, and many high offices were then in my possession, I took care to leave the prison in such a state, that we could easily make our escape; and I still possess many friends who will enable us to regain

gain our liberty, as soon as it shall appear that our coadjutors are as brave as usual.—To the Count * * and * * I have already written, and there is no doubt but that all will go on as much to our wishes as before, although they thought themselves so sure of us after they had taken us into custody. The bearer of this letter has also been before the tribunal, and has been examined, and was fortunately acquitted, a proof that these gentlemen are not so wise as they would think themselves; and that they will become the sport of me and my confederates.—Every thing else remains as before.

“ The Chief of the Venetian conspirators.”

I and my companions were equally astonished at the contents of this letter, which I shewed them upon their return, and particularly at the style in which it was written, and at the new base plot which was already so artificially planned and confided in. We were unanimously of opinion that this letter ought to be delivered to the inquisition, but we were not determined which of us could undertake this with the greatest propriety, without exciting the suspicions of the Armenian's coadjutors. Johnson charged himself with this commission, and immediately went out with the letter, under the supposition (as he had been formerly inspector of the Prince's finances) of having something of consequence to communicate. He was immediately admitted—They were astonished at the contents of this letter, and as much so at the possibility of so noted a prison as that of the inquisition being thus faulty. They returned me (together with a snuff box set with brilliants, which Johnson brought me back) their sincere thanks for the information, which I had by this means given to the state. It happened

happened as I suspected, after they had removed the prisoners to other convenient and secure places, they immediately examined the prison, and found actually, iron crows, scaling ladders, files, and such like tools, without which it would have been impossible to have made an escape from so strong a place. The greater part of them lay hid in the walls, so that they could not possibly have been found without some previous knowledge of them. They also unfortunately intercepted the letters to **dr. Neither the Armenian nor any of his confederates knew any thing before-hand of this circumstance. They contrived so that they should be totally ignorant of this new scheme, intending by this means perhaps to entangle the conspirators the more strongly in their net ; and they entreated me to depart from Venice in my Jewish dress, and also to assume the appearance of being willing to deliver the letter which was entrusted to my charge. But neither by this means, nor the innumerable spies which were always at the service of the state, could they discover a single conspirator, excepting those they were already acquainted with. Some whom the spies accused falsely for the sake of money, and who were afterwards happily cleared, cannot be justly reckoned in the number. I remained no longer absent from Venice, than was necessary to put myself into a condition to appear again in the character of the Count O. My sudden re-appearance excited great astonishment : they would scarcely believe their eyes, and I had enough to do to invent a probable history which would account for my sudden departure and reported death. They credited my assertions (in a period so full of mysteries, in which they were every where taught to expect wonders from those who stood

stood in any manner connected with the Prince) very readily believed, or at least pretended to believe me, which was quite sufficient for my purpose, because they no longer made inquiries after me, which I had endeavoured all along to prevent, by assuming a mysterious air. Lord Seymour had also now reassumed his former character, and for appearance sake, had taken Johnson into his service. And now all the suspected people belonging to the Prince were at liberty ; and it excited no astonishment to see me with Lord Seymour, being an old acquaintance of his, and they even saw me take lodgings in the same hotel with him. Here we were all assembled together again, and this with the wish and consent of the inquisition, not to give them any cause of suspicion, and that they might know immediately where to find us. The precaution with which we proceeded, may appear to some people unnecessary, because we never heard the least report of the Armenian having accomplices remaining, that could in the least interrupt our plans. I for my part employed my time in endeavouring to obtain an interview with the Prince, but this the scrupulous inquisition constantly refused, although they conducted themselves towards me with so much complaisance ; and it was with great difficulty that I could learn thus much from them, viz. that his present situation was not insupportable, and that they treated him with greater consideration than so capital a crime deserved.

With this I was obliged to content myself, and that the time of our waiting for the event of this important affair might appear as short as possible, we frequented every public place of amusement in the city. The best of these was what they call

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*Basini**, in which that reserved conduct and cold behaviour were less observable, which always banished every sociable friendship from the society of the Venetians.

One evening I was present at one of these *Basini*: and there was also an officer in a uniform at the same place.—The history of this colonel and his companions came into my mind, and I could not help suspecting that it was the same person who would have murdered the Prince by means of his footman. I was not mistaken—it was indeed the colonel himself. I heard his name by accident. I could with difficulty hide my terror, in spite of all the good I had formerly heard of the colonel. I was in this case obliged to believe the evidence of the footman, and I concluded that perhaps out of an ill-judged zeal for his court, he had consented that the murder of the Prince should be perpetrated. I immediately left the room, and went in quest of Lord Seymour, to whom I communicated my discovery.

"Is the colonel there now?" said he, interrupting me—

"Very likely," said I, "for when I left the room he was deeply engaged at the gaming-table."

"Let us then return to him." You surely joke; for how can I expect any thing good from

* These *Basini* were either private *Basini*, held in small houses, where the principal Venetians spent their time in private meditation, or in the society of particular friends, or oftentimes they were a kind of club, of which the following is the account.—"Whoever wished to have admission here, must be first introduced by a member, and then he could return as often as he pleased. These meetings, therefore, were not altogether public, as we might be led to suppose from the Count O's account of them."

him,

him, since I am a friend of that Prince whom he would have murdered?—Do you not rather think that he has put himself in the way of me because he has some design upon me? or do you not really believe that the colonel at the request of the court would have ordered the Prince to be murdered?"

" And why do you ask me? have you not seen Johnson's letter, in which it is so clearly proved?"

" Johnson only related what he had heard from the footman, a man of very shallow judgment, who might easily be deceived, provided the fly Armenian wished to use him as a snare to entrap the Prince. But that I may not have more objections to encounter, I will readily concede to your opinion, that this colonel has really sought after the life of the Prince, nay even more, that he has dangerous views upon yourself, and yet I will entreat you to go with me. We shall hazard nothing by this means, for we can easily remain at the Basini till day, and then we shall be safe enough, even if your suspicions are well founded, and you will learn also if he is an honest man, how to despise the wicked, and will moreover be freed from a vain fear. Who knows, but we may gain from him information, which may be of the greatest service too!—I was ashamed of my childish fears, and consented to go with him. As soon as he had an opportunity he began a conversation with the colonel, which I overheard at a distance, and they soon became so well pleased with each other that the colonel promised Lord Seymour to breakfast with him the next morning, which circumstance was highly gratifying to me, as I hoped the business would be then entirely explained. The whole company seemed to be well disposed to pleasure, and pursued every thing that was

was agreeable or entertaining. They joked, laughed, and sometimes entertained themselves with play, according to the taste of each individual. The morning star had risen before we consented to return home. The colonel pleased with the former invitation of Seymour, agreed to go home with him immediately, and we took him in the coach between us.—

"This then is your lodging" said he, as we stopped opposite to our apartment. "Now this is lucky for me; for I can at the same pay a visit which I was willing to have made this day, but could not find my man."

"May I ask," enquired Seymour, "who this person is."

"The Count O."

Lord Seymour gave me a side look, which I returned significantly.

"Do you know Count O?" said Seymour after a pause; "you and I will visit him to become acquainted with him—and I hope your visit will be by no means unpleasant, as at first I feared it might be."

"I cannot tell you how the affair hangs, and (you will excuse me) were I not an open hearted German grown grey in the midst of gaiety, where one learns to hate dissimulation; as you are desirous of procuring a secret from me, I would invent a tale to deceive you, and then laugh at you behind your back."

The open conduct of the colonel, brought him more and more into my favour, particularly as he did not take the least pains to conceal any thing. Johnson now came to us and opened the door.—The colonel awoke as from a dream.—He asked Seymour his name, and, as soon he had heard it,

Kept back a few steps, and stood with folded arms in astonishment.—

“ Seymour!” he exclaimed, are you Lord Seymour.” Have I not out of pure civility committed a stupid blunder, in not having long ago asked your name? and am I really with you? and even going to breakfast with you?—Surely you will not make me go mad. And you (addressing himself to me) perhaps you are Count O** himself.”

“ The same, at your service”—he took my hand, and shook it very heartily.—

“ I rejoice from my heart,” said he, “ to see you; and am truly glad to become acquainted with you.”

Every remaining distrust which I entertained was removed, so soon as I learnt from him that he had been here only a few days, and that it was the first time he had ever been in Venice; and this he proved by many uncontested evidences. It was also evident, that Lord Seymour had judged rightly; and that the appearance of this colonel, with the Prince’s footman, must have been an invention of the Armenian; for the colonel was confined at the very same time by a severe illness. We became more and more communicative to each other, and this was not wonderful; for besides every other consideration which could induce us to become so, a mutual interest drew us together, as we both hoped to clear up every thing relating to the Prince, concerning whom we now began to converse. What I was able to tell the colonel respecting the Prince, the reader already knows from the foregoing part of this history: and for the better elucidation of this matter, I will relate in regular order whatever he informed me of, that respected the history of the Prince.

“ You

" You have, perhaps," said the Colonel, addressing himself to me, " heard from the Prince himself, what a good understanding subsists between the present Regent of *** and myself. And I must say, I cannot conceive how the Prince should take affront at a letter (which, I will believe, might contain some harsh expressions) and suffer himself to be totally separated from him for such a trifler. Would it not have been better to have endeavoured to refute the false calumnies, which appeared at last to be too well founded?—Good God! perhaps by that means all these misfortunes might have been prevented. But instead of this, he returned so harsh an answer to the good man, that it forced tears from his eyes. I must tell you, that he converses with me in the most friendly manner. What could be more likely than that an irreconcilable rupture should happen between them?—Neither of them would concede, so long as each person thought himself in the right, and to be the injured party. And yet my master would, in all probability, have condescended so far as to request the Prince to justify himself, had it not been for the shameful interposition of some men, whose interest it evidently was, to prevent this reconciliation. You must not think that the bad reports which you heard concerning the regent were altogether true. He is really a good man, altho' no philosopher, nor will he even purchase the title of a great man, by shedding human blood; and hence it happens, that many people call him a fool; but they only shew their own weakness*."

* We easily perceive here the character of a friend; but nevertheless we must not altogether reject the whole of his account. The truth commonly lays between extremes; and that the reader might not be deceived by the former account, and might judge for himself, I have set down every thing that related to the Regent.

" But (I interrupted him) have you not learnt by chance, who it is that has calumniated the Prince at his court?"

" The accounts came from different places, and agreed so exactly with each other, that they would have almost made us believe impossibilities. The first account was given by the President * *, who had a correspondent in Venice, that communicated every thing to him; but the principal account was from the Baron F* *, who had always been so warm a friend of the Prince's, that one would rather have expected him to have written in his favour than against him."

" I would risque all my happiness for a nutshell," I exclaimed, " if the Count F* * ever wrote a word to the court prejudicial to his master; yea, rather—"

" We now know, with certainty," said he, interrupting me hastily, " that all was treachery; but how could it be known at that time.—The shameful and infamous plot is now unfolded, and I am come here to have the whole discovered, and to imprison all the other conspirators."

" Have you then," exclaimed Lord Seymour and myself, at the same instant, " have you then been able to discover this secret conspiracy, which the very watchful, and vigilant state-inquisition could not effect?"

" The President * *, whom I have already mentioned, was also in the plot, and had been the cause of all the changes which took place among us:—A terrible fall from his horse, brought him to death's door.—All the physicians gave him over—But his accusing conscience, which continued to torment him, did not permit him to die in peace. For some time he laid in the greatest ago-

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ny, sweating as it were drops of blood. At last he desired to speak in private with * *, because he had some information of the greatest importance to communicate to him; and we learnt wth horror, that he had put to death the hereditary Prince, and the uncle of the present Prince, by means of poison, which he had procured from Venice; and that a similar fate was likewise to have befallen * * *. Death, certainly the most terrible that ever fell to the lot of a man, prevented his discovering every thing.—He had burnt his papers before hand, and it was with difficulty that he could name to us the principal actors of the conspiracy in this place. Only the Count * * and myself knew any thing of this affair, and I have travelled day and night to arrive as soon as possible.

" The inquisition were astonished at my account, and you well know the rapidity with which they act.—Yesterday I learnt from them, under the strongest injunctions of secrecy, what you, Lord Seymour and a Mr. Johnson had done for the Prince, and this induced me to seek you immediately, to become acquainted with you, and I hoped also to become your friend ; but the servant told me you were not at home."—Johnson now came from a side room, in which he could overhear all our conversation, and a scene followed, the remembrance of which, will ever be dear to me, and in which the amiable character of the colonel, became more and more conspicuous.—But the more interesting it might be to us, the less, perhaps, would the reader gain by the description ; and I shall therefore omit it, as it does not regularly belong to the history.—By means of the colonel, who had received unlimited power from the court, to act in this business, relating to the

the Prince, according to his best judgment, we obtained access to him. He viewed me with a smile full of grief, and stook my hand in a sorrowful manner. " You come not, my dear Count, I hope to reproach me?" said he to me, after a short pause, during which I endeavoured to summon up all my resolution.

" Gracious Prince, said I, can you conceive this of me? I wish to God I had not found you in this situation, and I would give my life, if it could undo every thing. But I believe this was ordered in the councils of eternal Providence, which often permits evil to happen, that good may arise out of it; and you have at least my compassion, although I can give you no other assistance."

" I thank you; you pour sweet balsam into my wounded mind? but alas! I must not accept even this compassion. Illustrious nobleman, whose goodness, I have too little known, I deserve not the compassion of any man, and least of all from you. Yes, that would be too much for a sinner of my description. I know how readily men excuse themselves, but I cannot do it, and you will therefore conclude, whether it is possible another should.—Let me confess to you, that the chain of sins, which I have committed, almost distract me."

" But were you not driven to the commission of them all, by irresistible artifice? Oh! I know the whole of the transaction; I know more even than you do; and here I will declare before the all-wise God, that you have resisted every thing, like a man; that you did not suffer yourself to be easily overcome; and that hundreds in your place would have yielded long ago.

" But

" But I, however, sunk at last, and so deep! —Was this necessary? Had I not the power to withstand it? Ah! I know I had; for what would be virtue, if it had not the power to combat the charms of vice? And what would be man if you should take from him his free agency? Could we shun vice, and adhere to virtue, if we were forced by circumstances, to act as mere machines. No, my dear Count, I had rather perish under the weight of all my unworthiness, than ascribe to God the cruelty, that he can create men like an artificer, who from the same metal makes instruments for the benefit of mankind, and for their destruction."

" That I will not say, but Oh! Prince! I feel the narrow limits of my reason, and can offer you no farther comfort, than what our religion affords, " God is loving and merciful." But he is just in the same degree, without which he would be deficient in his greatest attribute, perfection. How well it is for you, then, that you did not willingly commit those errors, nor until you became, as it were, intoxicated with zeal!"

" I have answered that argument before—That does not excuse me. I disregarded my true friends, and suffered them to be murdered in cold blood."

" But you did not consent to it, till you thought you were convinced, that they were traitors, and had betrayed you."

" I consented to it, however. Invent no more excuses for me, dear Count, for those crimes will totally destroy my comforts."

" Will you then pertinaciously reject every comfort, that your friend or your religion can offer?"

" That I will not; but must not the remembrance of my disgrace, for ever follow me? Must it

it not pursue me to eternity, and even there make me wretched? Can I drive from my memory my past conduct? Can God forgive me? Alas! my dear friend! All consolation is lost—every hope gone! An arm, which has once been broken, retains the effect of the fracture for ever."

" But, notwithstanding it afterwards performs its services, and the possessor very often forgets, that it has been injured.—Believe me, upon my word, you may be happy again, if you choose. Shall I remind you of those eminent, consoling words in the holy scripture: ' There is more joy in heaven, over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance.'

The Prince meditated, but his countenance lost its fearful expression. His eyes were fixed, and darted wildly a look of despair, but with a mixture of composure that denoted hope.—I thought proper to leave him alone.

That the reader may comprehend in the most adequate point of view, the situation of this unhappy man, I have put down the whole dialogue.

Oh, reader, bestow on him thy compassion, who feels thy reproaches, which will be a benefit to the heart. Do not triumph that thou hast not yet been seduced:—Let his errors teach thee, that the smallest step from the path of virtue, is the beginning of the greatest crime.

At my next visit, I found the Prince, to my great happiness, more composed than when I saw him the last time. Before him the New Testament was laying open, which I had procured him at his desire.—

" Now," said he, " I understand many things, which before were dark to me. What a benefit is

is our religion ! It has again elevated my soul, which was cast down by so many heavy burdens, to the highest pitch of gladness. To that alone, I am indebted for not falling a sacrifice to the most horrid despair.—Now the hope again revives, that God will forgive me for the sake of his Son, who sacrificed himself for me.”

He seemed to have renounced every thing in this world and his whole occupation was, to prepare himself for futurity ; religion was his only thought.—

“ And have you no other wish, the fulfilling of which, might make you happy ?” I asked him at last.—

He continued thoughtful for some time.

“ If it were possible,—said he,—I could wish to understand entirely the texture of the deceptions and malice through which I became so unfortunate. Nobody can give me a key to it but the Armenian and they will refuse my seeing him. I should also chuse to die in my native country, and to speak, were it only one word, to the *** and to ask his pardon—dear Count, you see, my wishes go too far, I renounce them.”

I promised to do all in my power to fulfil his request, and hastened immediately to the colonel.

Happily he met me in the room :

“ Behold,” said he, “ a new proof how nobly my master the *** thinks, and how much is to be hoped from him for the Prince. This moment I received the following letter from him.”—He gave it to me, and I read it.

“ MY DEAREST COLONEL.”

“ MY situation at your departure did not per-

mit me to give you other than common charges, in respect to the Prince.—There is no mistrust in your mind, nor deceit in your heart, to prevent my making you acquainted with my inclination very distinctly, and not to leave every further proceeding to your prudence ; I am confident that you will endeavour to fulfil in every particular on account of your love of justice, and your hatred to wickedness, all that can alleviate the distresses of our unhappy Prince. Know then, that I forgive him every thing from my heart, release him from every punishment, and even wish that he may become my successor.

“ It is on this side we ought to contemplate him.

“ My heart dictates it to me when I consider that he did not act in that way willingly, but was urged to it by unheard of deception and villainy. I wait for your objections.

“ It is understood, that all this can happen only as soon as he shall have reformed himself entirely, and I hope this will be effected by his manifold sufferings ; the whirlpool of misfortunes, and accumulated miseries into which he was thrown, must have opened his eyes, and purified his soul.

“ Should my wishes, however, not agree with the consequences, I can do nothing more, than forgive him on account of myself, yet I do not expect that all must be kept secret from him, that my proffered forgiveness may not put a stop to his conversion.

“ If I should die before I have an opportunity to relate to him all myself, you may shew him this letter.

“ The whole history shall be made known in Venice, according to my wish, and the punishment

ment of the criminals. As soon as the Prince is dismissed as an evidence, you may come secretly hither with him. That all this may not give trouble, I have written a letter to the tribunal, which you only must deliver.

"Here,—nobody knows any thing of the fearful history ; and you will, therefore, contrive as much as possible, to assist the prevailing secrecy.

"My old malady has again attacked me, which sorrow has not a little contributed to increase, and my writing and broken sentences will shew this distinctly—I believe my end is not far off, and I wish once more to speak to the Prince. Let this induce you not to be detained by any circumstance that is not of real consequence from hastening your departure...

"* * * d * * *."

"Is it not true that he is a most noble man?" exclaimed the colonel, and tears of joy rolled down his cheeks. "See, how he gave himself the trouble, on his sick-bed, whence it must have been very difficult for him to collect or connect his thoughts, to write to me this letter for the welfare of the Prince, who in the mean time—well let us forget that, for he was also formerly a good man."

During that time the Count hastily took his hat and sword, and wished to deliver the letter. I made him acquainted with his desire to speak with the inquisitors, and he hastened away.

The letter and his representations had such an effect, that the following day the Armenian was conducted to the Prince, who surveyed him with composure. No look of revenge disfigured his eye—no reproach escaped his lips. What a difference

ference between him and the Armenian, who now seemed to call up all his powers, to hide his embarrassment, which for the first time in his life perhaps did not support him.

" Prince," he began,—“ You see my embarrassment, which (for what reason I know not), I am not able to conceal. Have you commanded me to be brought hither, to delight yourself with my sufferings. I swear to you, you shall behold me no more, although my body is so much enfeebled by imprisonment, that I am now unable to command it according to my desires. Or, do you wish for the happiness," whilst he looked around the room, " to see me murdered before your eyes? Oh! I shall not die like a coward, for to me life is but a vapour—I feared nobody, and my death shall not cost me a sigh.”—

“ You wrong yourself,” answered the Prince, with sorrow, “ by such an idea. I forgive from my heart all that you have done to me; I forgive with joy that you made me unhappy, if you can be benefited by that?”

“ Can you forgive me? I know not why this thought so much delights me. But what do you desire of me ?”

“ An explanation of what has happened to me.”

“ No, that cannot be.—Oh, Prince, I acknowledged your compassion, which I do not deserve. It affects me more than the most excruciating torments. Now I contemplate myself as a monster. But to what purpose? I see that I am over-powered, and my schemes are at an end. Is this the case with all my confederates? You wish for an explanation?

“ Hear then my history, without which nothing can be understood by you. I will deliver it to you faithfully;

faithfully ; for at present it is impossible for me to lose any thing by it. You cannot think otherwise than that I am one of the greatest villains, and my narration will tell you the same. If I believe that I am such a one—Prince, this we shall entirely lay aside. Sometimes I think so,—sometimes not.

“ This short dialogue will convince you, that the *leaden roofs* alone have produced in me a feebleness which I can bear no longer ; the former strength of my principles are certainly not fitted for a deficiency of intellect. You may ascribe it to that if in my narration I should make a mistake.”

My hand shakes whilst I write down his history, which is nothing more than a chain of the most wicked deeds. Had I not heard it from himself, I should doubt whether a man could be able to act thus, and could destroy without remorse the last blossom of repentance.

HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN.

Related by himself.

MY father, began the Armenian, was a senator in this city, which once trembled at my word but now rejoices that it need no longer fear me, like the child, who is pleased to see the wall beaten against which it hurt itself. He had conducted himself in many honourable situations, which prudence and judgment. On account of these qualities, which he knew how to make the best use of, and his great experience, he was invested with the office of ambassador at Rome.

His young consort, who loved him with the warmest affection, accompanied him thither, and presented him a few weeks after their arrival there with a son—this was me. The excessive joy of my father was but of short duration—my mother gave me life, but to lose her own by it, for she died a few days after her delivery.

Doctor Silvio, who had attended my mother during her pregnancy, and by his indefatigable care had acquired the confidence of my father in the highest degree, from this moment took charge of me. He consigned me to the care of his wife, who had been a little time before brought to bed of a daughter, and promised, with the greatest pleasure, to fulfil all the duties of a mother towards me. In the strictest sense of the words she did not fulfil her promises, for she spoiled me, and never

in the smallest degree observed what propensities I discovered, and how they ought to be directed.

The Doctor believed also that he had done his duty when he prescribed a dose for me from time to time ; and as for my vicious tricks, (which are usually called the early blossoms of a more than ordinary genius), nobody ever thought about them. Hence it happened that my disposition, not confined by any curb, very soon took a bent which no restraint was able to controul.

Before I could pronounce my father's name, he was recalled from his embassy. It was his desire that I might (before I should know him) be educated here at a distance from Venice, and be drawn from my obscurity, when I was formed as he intended me to be.

He thought to procure me by that means great advantages over other children of our nobility, who were in general most wretchedly educated.

Every thing was made use of, both to form my mind and body. I comprehended every lesson easily, and very seldom forgot it again ; I possessed judgment and memory in a very extraordinary degree. Every science, art, or exercise, which they taught me, soon became mere play to me, and I very often embarrassed my teachers with questions and objections. I was every where celebrated as a wonderful child, and the papers very often extolled me and my bon-mots. This was carried so far, that foreigners of the greatest note frequently came to see me, or sent for me to their houses. By the extravagant presents which they made me, the Doctor whom I shall call father, as I thought him so till a future period) became very soon one of the richest of his profession. I hope not to incur the odium of gasconading. The idea

idea is intolerable to me. No, I have facts enough, which would seem incredible, if they had not been transacted before witnesses. And what should I gain by it? Must not even my extraordinary talents be an additional incitement to every one who does not profess my principles, to condemn me? Will not every one who conceives that a great gulph is placed between himself and me, say, that the opinion and use which I made of my extraordinary talents, render me the greatest monster, with which the earth was ever cursed in the form of a human being? Am I not to be detested for abusing talents, which if otherwise used, might have blessed mankind a thousand fold, and which employed so basely, became its curse!

Prince, I am not able to conceal my sensations—for what cause I know not. I always had fortitude enough, but now it ceases. It is as if all my confidence were deserting me, and I was on the point of cursing the hour in which I was born. Do you shudder at the idea?—Remember, that I do not repent of any of my actions, although they may be the cause why I shall not breathe out my last sigh upon a downy pillow. But yet, not to give any pain to your reconverted heart, I sometimes shall play the character of a repenting sinner. I tell you this before hand, that you may not take it for earnest, and utter before the proper time, some pious sighs over the lost but recovered sheep*

* These words were accompanied with a burst of laughter, that even now the thought of it makes my hair to stand erect. His countenance was indescribable frightful. At that moment I was doubtful whether he was really a human being, for what must he be who could consider repentance of actions (for which Satan himself could not blush) as disgraceful; and when it oppressed him with violence, seek to conceal it before us by the most shameful publicity.

*Note of Count O ****.*

—But

—But to continue. My external form corresponded with my mind; whoever beheld me, caressed and admired me, and my father would have been ashamed to chastise such an universal darling, if I had ever been so incautious as to suffer myself to be surprised in the execution of an unpardonable trick. I soon considered every encomium as a tribute which was due to me. If I took a dislike to any one, it lasted much longer than the hatred of children generally does; and if any one ventured to blame me, woe be to him! for I never rested till I revenged myself. One incident may be recorded here as an example of the rest, and will give you an idea of what I was in my seventh year.

My father had a very sincere friend named Cabellioni. He visited us almost every day, and notwithstanding his continual gravity, he was esteemed by the whole family, because he was universally believed to be a man of principle and integrity. I alone was perfectly indifferent about him, till the period when I hated him from my soul.

I was playing at cards with some other boys; and being already too much accustomed to have the advantage, I was angry that fortune did not that evening use me very politely. I endeavoured to gain that which she denied me by unfair means, and such as were far beyond my years. My companions, who were all much older than myself, did not perceive it; however I had a lecture for my unfair dealing, for Signor Cabellioni, without my perceiving it, slipped himself behind my chair, and was observing me. As much as I was enraged at his reprimand, I yet knew how to hide my vexation under a smiling countenance, and had presence of mind enough to profess that my tricks

were

were merely a trial, to see how far I could go on with them, before my playfellows discovered them. Cabellioni shook his head thoughtfully, and this very circumstance enraged me so much the more against him, because it was a proof that he did not believe my excuses; I was obliged to wait several days before I could be revenged.

Behind our house there was a small garden, and a very elegant summer house. A party of my father's friends were drinking chocolate in it. Cabellioni was leaning with his back against a window which was very low. With the greatest ease, I got up to it on the outside, and fastened to his large perriwig a piece of pack-thread, to which also was affixed a steavy stone. This I laid upon the window-frame in such a manner, that the smallest movement Cabellioni made, must throw it down, and consequently carry away the wig with it.

Scarcely had I very gravely seated myself in my place when this happened, while the company broke out into a laugh, at the ridiculous appearance the astonished Cabellioni made; I ran out to unfasten the wig from the stone, and restored it to its owner; he thanked me for this attention as kindly as if I had rendered him a great benefit, but whilst he caressed me, I meditated (not yet sufficiently revenged) upon a new scheme, which would do him real injury, and I found it very easy to accomplish.

Cabellioni had a very rare collection of fine porcelain, on which he set his heart. I thought of nothing less, that the depriving him of his dearest treasure, by destroying it; and in this I succeeded without incurring the smallest suspicion; I left one single piece whole, and the next day I had the pleasure to see him bewail his misfortune to my father, with tears in his eyes.—

This

This thirst for revenge, which could be roused to the highest degree by the most trifling advantage, which any one gained over me, or by the smallest offence against my pride, increased so much, that even in my sixteenth year, I plunged, in cool blood, a dagger into the heart of one of my companions, because I was reprimanded on his account by one of my masters. I threw the body into the Tiber, and no one ever knew of this action.—

You will easily imagine, what an effect it must have had upon me, that all my undertakings succeeded, and I frequently was able to procure the greatest advantage by them.

“ But,” said the Prince, interrupting him, “ the most consummate hypocrite has moments, (be it ever so seldom) when his real countenance may be discovered through the mask. Was this never your case?”

It happened but very seldom to me, and then, I always managed to extricate myself so well, that the most refined wickedness was willingly believed to be the intemperance of youth.—

In such cases, I never spared my tears, I accused myself, magnified the crime, severely reproached myself with it, pretended to recall it to my mind with the deepest sighs. They embraced me with rapture, and begged me not to think any more about it. Had I reason to fear that one of my tricks must unavoidably be discovered, I was immediately the first to make it known to them, on which account they naturally placed unlimited confidence in my candour.

By these means, I easily discovered the weak side of every one, with whom I was at all acquainted, and as soon as it was necessary, I knew how to make this discovery serve my purposes, and this

this aided me in the commission of many crimes; for their eyes were always blinded with regard to me, and those who surrounded me did not narrowly watch me. My father spent the few hours of leisure, which his public business afforded him, in his laboratory, and was too much occupied by his studies to observe me, otherwise than superficially; because that fairness of character in me, which is inherent in a child, was merely external appearance. He seldom spoke to me, except at table, and there I always contrived to display such a brilliant side of my character, to set off all my talents to such advantage, that he always treated me with encomiums. As for my mother, I only had to say a few soothing things to her, and she readily forgot all that she had observed wrong in me; and my preceptors were satisfied when they received their monthly stipend, and praised my talents, when to soothe my ambition, I had learnt more than had been assigned me.

By all these great faults of my youth, by the greatest ambition, and infufferable pride, which made me sometimes look down with contempt upon the greatest men;—by the detestable envy, and the unconquerable desire for revenge on all, whom I thought my enemies; I possessed an unbounded and never satisfied wish to govern. All my play-fellows were obliged to submit to my authority. Where I dared not to command, I employed other means to attain my end, and which very seldom failed.

I was the master of the house, and sometimes commanded, when my conduct bespoke obedience. I knew well what would lead in every instance to the gratification of my wishes, I could act with the greatest humility in every situation, and

and there was not a moment when I could not shift my disguise at pleasure.

Of good qualities which I possessed, according to the ideas of moralists, I can reckon but very few; because I knew how to use them for my own benefit. However, I will resume my relation, having explained my ideas of right and wrong! otherwise you often would not understand me, if I should absent myself too far from the common mode of speaking, and use language agreeable to my principles.

With talents, to comprehend any thing very quickly, and to form of it a proper idea, I was also possessed of very fine sensibility, which was affected by the most trifling circumstance.

If I once began any undertaking I persevered in it with the greatest obstinacy, without being deterred by the most formidable obstacles; (for to give it up I was ashamed) though the consequences might not be at all pleasant to me. My pleasing, flattering behaviour enchanted all, although it was nothing more than policy, which the pious simpleton degrades with the name of hypocrisy.

Govern every where, soon became my watch-word; to shine and be admired, my favourite thought. To satisfy it, those means only seemed to me fit, which would have deterred other people, and the most expeditious way to arrive at my aim, was the most welcome to me. A path over putrified skeletons, seemed not at all frightful to me, if it was but the nearest. The little advantage I could gain by the misfortune of other people, was, however, a great acquisition to me. My heated imagination pointed out to me the pinnacle upon which I should hereafter be elevated, and painted

painted my prosperity to me in my night dreams in glowing colours.

I looked with ecstacy upon my rising consequence and was delighted with it ; like the hero who rejoiced at seeing his brother's blood, which twined a laurel round his temples. I was often secretly vexed, that my birth did not give me a right to regencies or command, but I soon found out the method to procure them, and my chagrin was dissipated.

When a boy, my thoughts were often engaged on that subject, for my comrades frequently told me, that I did not pay any attention to the game. The man possessed of a knowledge of human nature, would have laughed or sighed within himself at such ideas, according to the humour ; or would have looked upon me perhaps, as a fool full of wild projects, and to whom bedlam would be a benefit.

My reflections never escaped my lips.

My intention is to sketch to you, my qualities and dispositions.

I believe I have fulfilled more than that already. The earlier periods of my life contain more, than the whole life of many a man, whose thoughts and wishes rise not above the idea of existence ; and who, enervated by continual feasting, is inactive and expert only at common things.—I will not now sound my own praise. I was always a child, though not a common one. As I grew up time seemed to move with the pace of a snail ; how could I therefore brook such delay ?

Early than common I left the circle which was drawn for my age, I shook off my childish behaviour, like a caterpillar, which, warmed by the beams of the sun, emerges before its time from the

the surrounding film. Urged by the most violent desire for knowledge, I undertook to accomplish objects, which surmounted the experience of my years. I was never satisfied. The first step that I took in this new field, displayed the horizon before me, and the unexpected clearness which it represented to my mind, gave me courage to venture on and to study it closer. I was dissatisfied with myself, that my spirit had not wings, for I was often obliged to stay a long time to accomplish the object, which at first appeared to me like little hills at a distance. Upon that which I could attain without much difficulty, I ventured first.

Every day the fondness my father entertained for chemical experiments increased. His patients were obliged to sigh in pain, whilst he was buried in attending to the crucibles, and in a little time not one person employed him. This was perfectly agreeable to his wishes, for he was less disturbed.—I was obliged very often to stifle a laugh, when I covered him with coal dust, and saw him come from his laboratory smothered with dirt; but I thought that chemistry must have some particular charms, to attach my father so forcibly to it,—and this was sufficient to excite my curiosity, and induce me to inquire into the nature of the science.

Nothing was easier, than to request the doctor, to give me permission, to spend the following day in his laboratory, and he triumphed indeed at my proposal. My mother, who was an inveterate enemy to such business, because it made a great deal of dirt, and spoiled the skin, endeavoured to prevent my application to it, but in vain; none of her objections had any weight with my father, although he had shewn her much respect in other cases.

cases. To the remark: that it was too early for me to begin, she added—that it did not at all suit me, with a sarcastic smile; whilst my father maintained, that such an excellent attachment to the art could not commence too early, nor fail to produce the most beneficial effects—I became by that more inflamed, **** “too early and would not suit me” (which last I ascribed to my youth,) the other objections I kissed from my mother’s lips and my first resolution remained; — — — I went, at day break, with my father into the laboratory.

The many instruments which I found there, ovens, melting pots, coals of every sort and description, excited in the first instance, my attention. My father had not time to answer the multitude of questions that I put to him, and he desired a little patience. That I thought was to set a boundary to my active mind, which it could not submit to, and when my father absented himself I immediately went to work. He corrected my indiscretion, and put that into my hands which was fitted for a beginner, but this method was too tedious for me. My ambition alone prevented my not giving it up, for I was certain of being exposed to the laughter of my mother, who had announced the difficulties to me before hand, and I studied not to lose any thing in the esteem of my father, who was so proud of my shewing such an early attachment to the science. The hope to attract new admirers, bid defiance to my dissatisfaction, and I went through every part of the business which my father set me upon, with the greatest fortitude. This restraint did not last long, for I very soon discovered a real taste for chemical processes, and became as fond of the science as my father—I hope I do not deserve any reproach from you,

you, because I am here a little too explicit! If I had given to you only a mere sketch of it, it might have appeared to you improbable; for I was then no more than eleven years of age.

In a short time I made such progress that my father was astonished. I manufactured phosphorus of the best quality, made sympathetic ink of every kind, and invented particular things, which no person but myself is acquainted with—I had now to shine in a new department amongst my school-fellows, and other inexperienced persons. I practised the miraculous, and they thought me, a phenomenon. They were astonished prodigiously, when they saw at night around my whole body, a brilliant flame, or when I filled the whole room with light by the vapour of camphire, or when I struck fire with a dagger against the wall of the room, or played some other tricks of that kind.—All seemed from this circumstance to keep at a distance from me; for they feared me without loving me, though that is not common in those years, when our hearts beat warmly in our bosom, and are open to every tender tie. It battered my ambition, that I had not a rival. By the extraordinary appearance which I sought to give to every one of those insignificant tricks, I obtained excellence, and I was satisfied with it, as I had no friend, no confidant, that would have been an acquisition agreeable to my natural character. I pursued my way alone, and very early found the avenues to every human heart shut against me. I seemed very often to act the friend, but in fact was never sincere.—Our servants also were very much afraid of me: my tricks frightened them, and my boastings were believed. My father laughed

at their childish fear, and suffered them to remain in ignorance—because it amused him.

To be thus always surrounded by persons, who thought me far superior to themselves and who acknowledged it, you may easily conceive had a great influence on my character in the subsequent period of my life. In relating the trifles, which formerly delighted me, I will not lose the time, which I must bestow upon greater actions. My impetuous disposition did not permit me to meditate long upon any thing. Every book in my father's library, which suited my purpose, I read with the greatest avidity, and I soon made, with the assistance of them, and my own inventions, experiments which were not common. That this is true, you may easily conjecture, when I say that I thought many of them worthy, to be made use of, and applied them, Prince, in your adventures, where I had to fear curiosity. Till I come to these, I shall say no more of them.—A certain book, which I found in my father's library, was of great service to me. It was written by Albertus Magnus* in the Latin language. From it I learned several things and their use, which conducted me always farther, and I was likewise possessed of a great number of other instruments, as—magical lanthorns, magnets, electrical machines, as my father had already a large collection of them, with the electrical machine, which was at that time almost unknown, and which they knew not how to manage, I made many attempts, and several of my discoveries effectually answered my purpose. Let me now overleap the space of time till my six-

* The title of that book is : *Albertus Magnus de Secretis Mulierum, item de virtutibus herbarum, lapidum et animalium*. Amst. 1665.

teenth year. The greatest part of it was taken up with such business, (by which however I did not neglect any other) which could be serviceable to the cultivation of my science. The little circle in which I had lived till then, and in which I had shone, and tyrannised, became now too narrow for me. The applause and admiration of those, who daily surrounded me, was tedious to me, because I no longer found pleasure in it.

There always burned in me a desire for great achievements, which never could be satisfied. I easily perceived that my father would not willingly suffer me to go from him, and I resolved without much difficulty, to make myself a path into the great world, without his consent.—Do not wonder at that; for every thing was disregarded so as it hindered the gratification of my passions. The following night I packed up those things which would be necessary and useful to me on my journey, and at the break of day I found myself in the right road, and full of exultation from the prospect of success in my plan. I left for my foster parents a letter, which I laid in a place, where I knew they would not find it before evening, and at that time I believed I should be safe from being discovered.

" My dear parents,

" My spirit soars beyond the sphere in which I am confined, under your auspices, and seeks after things that I can never attain in your society. These I am going in pursuit of; and let this serve as an excuse for my leaving you so suddenly and without bidding farewell, as I did not think that you would give me your consent.

“ A better method to accomplish my purpose,
and which might have been more agreeable to
you I could not find,

“ Your

“ FERDINANDO.”

“ WITHOUT

" WITHOUT having any settled plan, I passed the first town-gate. It was the same to me whither I went; and wrapt up in contemplating the prospect of any future day, I walked through the street, without observing the objects which surrounded me.

" The road that I pursued was encompassed with small bushes, which by degrees grew thicker and thicker, as I pursued the track.

" Stop!"—cried a thundering voice, and immediately a frightful fellow stood before me, who held a cocked pistol to my breast. I appeared willing to deliver up to him the property that I had about me; but when he was off his guard, I wrenched the pistol from his hand, and at the same moment, plunged a dagger into his breast. I made myself master of his money. The passport too, which I found in his pocket, struck me, that such a thing might, one time or other, be also useful to me; and I secured it. By the assistance of his clothes, I disguised myself so that no person could possibly know me. Thus was I secure against any warrants that might be issued to apprehend me; and extremely happy that so fortunate an adventure had at once enriched, and enabled me to pursue my journey with greater security.

" The extravagant ideas which I had of myself, and upon which I built the greatest expectations, were soon dissipated by experience; for in every city that I travelled through, I found the total reverse of that which I had supposed would take place. I flattered myself, that I should be received every where with open arms; and with what astonishment

astonishment did I learn, that no credit was given to the idle and bombastic tales that had been circulated respecting me ! I cannot conceive how it happened, that I put up with such gross affronts, and why I did not seek to revenge the insult in a manner which would have the people in future to credit my assertions. Was it for want of worldly experience ? Or did the charms of novelty so much enchant me, as to prevent any other circumstance from making an impression upon my mind ?—Both might, perhaps, have influenced my conduct; together with the piercing reflection, that I was an abandoned outcast upon the world. My former resolute spirit seemed quite lost, and an irresistible power pressed me to return to my parents*. As long as my money lasted, however, all went on very well; but I observed with sorrow, that decrease very much, and that the furies of want would soon begin to attack me. I saw no way to prevent the dreadful consequences of such a misfortune—I confess that my indolence sometimes overpowered me with shame ; but still retaining my old prejudices in favour of my abilities, I went into an inn, with scarcely any thing in my pocket, and suffered myself to be treated like a gentleman, without ever thinking in what way I was to satisfy the landlord. I could with very little trouble change my dress, and disfigure my face and person, so that no one could discover me ; and in case of necessity I intended to practise that artifice.

“ The greater part of the strangers who dined with me at the same table, called for cards after the cloth was removed. They invited me to play. The valuable ring on my finger, I suspected,

* Or it was perhaps the piercing voice of conscience.

traded their notice ; flattering themselves no doubt that I should fall an easy prey, from my youth and inexperience. They played very high ; but I soon found, from the many dishonest schemes I pursued, that I had the advantage of them ; I stripped them of almost every thing they had. In the height of anger, they gave up the game ; and elevated with my success, I reproached myself for not having followed before such a lucrative business.

" From that moment I resolved to make it my principal study ; and I was so successful, that in a little time it led me to keep a coach and servants. My youth, I thought, would be a bar to that respect, which is, in general, paid to age ; so to obviate that difficulty, I contrived to make myself appear a man of about thirty years of age ; and as, at that time, I was as tall as I am now, the deception was practised with effect ; for, by an artificial beard, brown manly colour, and false testimonials, I procured an entrance into all eminent societies.

" Besides gaming, I did not neglect to satisfy my attachment for extraordinary performances. At every place where I resided, I played some trick or other, for which they generally remembered me. But they were all, however, of such a nature, that they did not do any material harm. Thus, for example, many an eminent prelate became the object of laughter, if I ornamented his cowl with a jack-ass's head. Many a lady was out of countenance, when I assured her, that instead of a red ribbon, she had put on a grey one ; and she at last found this a truth before a looking-glass. Another scarcely could recover herself from a fit, when they told her, that she resembled a black lady to a hair.

hair. And a third was half dead, when she perceived, that the beauty-spots on her face, which she had managed with great care, looked like sun, moon, and stars, and had all the colours of the rain-bow.

" Of that kind were the tricks I played. I only mention them to you, not to leave a blank in my narrative, but will not trouble you with them farther, because I think they are mere trifles, and fit only for the stage of a mountebank. I very seldom had any other views than those of momentary pleasure, and to see myself admired, and looked upon by those in whose company I practised those foibles ; they have not the least influence upon my future history. You may easily inform yourself of those mysterious pranks, if you procure the book of *Albertus Magnus*.

" I must now turn to those events which originated with me, or have at least been guided by me, in order that I might ascend to the highest pinnacle of my ambition. The pious drone, who neglects to make use of the wings which nature has bestowed upon him, will, no doubt say, that they are the offspring of malice, revenge, and deception, and stamp them with his detestation ; because, from his natural stupidity, he is not able to fathom the design.

" Many are rendered famous by following the systems of their predecessors ; but I was without that advantage, and depended entirely upon myself. I acted coolly ; but not without machines, the smallest motion of which I had calculated with the greatest accuracy. Villains, in general, destroy those whom accident throws in their way. I only committed murder when I discovered any enemies to my plans being put in execution ! You

Prince,

Prince, will see I played by that a capital character.

" Every rash action, added the Count O..., is but of a short duration.

" The Armenian endeavoured to conceal his repentance, by the ecstasy into which he laboured to throw us and himself. But it had seized so powerfully upon his hardened heart, that in spite of all his artifices, we could perceive his remorse, and he very soon became exhausted.

" We were obliged to permit him to go away. And that his health might not entirely be destroyed, which was already very much injured by the terrible prison in which he had been confined, under the leaden roofs of St. Mark's place; fearing that he might be prevented by a sudden death, or madness, from giving us the key to events of so much consequence, the Colonel interceded with the best effect to remedy his situation.

" After a few days he felt himself sufficiently recovered to continue his narrative, which he seemed inclined to do.

" He might, perhaps, have reflected on his past life; for his self-satisfied countenance had changed very much, and his high-toned speech was lowered; although he every now and then displayed his savage disposition, and on that account it was very difficult for us to judge of his true character. From his appearance, I supposed he was influenced by the effects of returning sensibility, and yet endeavouring all in his power to suppress it."

He continued.

" What will give you an idea of my character, I have related to you as sincerely as any biographer can do of himself; the period until my thirty-se-

cond year, (which indeed contains so much that I could fill up several folio volumes) I shall run thro' very briefly. It contains nothing that concerns your history, nor does it cause in me such dreadful reflections as the subsequent days of my life.

" In this space of time, I endeavoured to obtain that which was necessarily wanting on account of my youth. I studied with infinite assiduity the knowledge of mankind, which was easily obtained from the multitude of propitious events that constantly occurred to assist me in my speculations.

" During that time I travelled through all Europe, and a part of Asia and Africa. I also procured partizans at several courts. With their assistance, I played many tricks in every department in which they were concerned. This flattered my ambition, which aimed at nothing less than to be governor of some state."

" And that was really your expectation?" said the Prince, hastily.

" And I should certainly have accomplished my aim," answered he, " if I could have remained undiscovered one quarter of a year longer."

" One would think it almost impossible, that an idea so extravagantly absurd should have entered your mind, and yet you endeavoured to carry it into effect, notwithstanding all the difficulties that surrounded you! But how is it possible for you to procure such partizans in the cabinets of the great, upon whose influence you could depend?—Are not persons of integrity elected to such employments; men who are proof against corruption?"

Oh! my gracious Prince, if other people doubted the possibility of accomplishing a purpose, I reckoned with the greatest certainty upon its attainment. I frequently suggested to them new plans, and suddenly

suddenly

suddenly the work was finished. They looked at it with all the astonishment that a blind man would do upon the world, were he suddenly to be restored to sight. No one suspected its existence, no one comprehended its design. Even those who were employed on it, very often did not know what building they were constructing, when they were putting the finishing stroke to it."

" You forget yourself—you load me with new mysteries, without having unravelled the first. I should like to know by what means you succeeded to bring the persons engaged in the secret cabinets of the different courts you mention, so entirely to your interests?"

" To your reply, that the great only elect men of undoubted sincerity to such employments, I could, if I wished, prove to you quite the contrary; and that the greatest treacheries have already been committed by such people. But I did not want to make use of such means as they could procure me!"

—The method by which I enchanted them was, to indulge their passions. The miser's hands I filled with money—the frantic, I threw into enthusiasm;

—I painted before the fancy of the ambitious, the satisfaction of his wishes—those that sought revenge, I assisted in fulfilling their desires—and the voluptuous became my foil. Oh! you will scarcely believe what unbounded influence I often obtained with the most conscientious, by procuring them a pair of blue languishing eyes, or by the assistance of a pretended virgin—according as the taste of my subjects required.—There was not one in whom I did not discover a weak side, by which I could guide him at my pleasure; and sovereigns very often listened to my inventions. I tell you this last for your own tranquillity, my Prince; as

as it proves, that others were in a similar situation with yourself."

" No more of this—your answer is not satisfactory ; I wish rather to draw new questions from it. From whence did you, in the first place, acquire all those large sums, which were necessary, as you said yourself, to feed avaricious men ?—You could not possibly acquire sufficient by gaming to do that, and support at the same time, the pageantry which you were obliged to display ?"

" That I could not forward all my plans by gaming, I own, though I acquired large sums by it. But having adopted a title to my own fancy, it procured me easy access to the best of company ; I resorted likewise to a variety of other methods, I forged hand-writings, and manufactured false bank notes ; and by that means I carried on a genteel rogueish trade. I will relate but one of my tricks to you, to convince you of the possibility of this.—

" At . . . n, whither I travelled for the purpose of procuring sixty-thousand dollars, which I wanted for the corruption of a minister of the court of . . . —I gave myself out for the Duke of . . . — This Prince was, as I knew for certain, upon his travels, and residing at that time in . . . incognito. This lucky accident was assisted by his resembling me very much in his person ; and what was wanting, I easily supplied by art. The conversation which I had with him, whilst on a visit at his court, enabled me, without any difficulty, to imitate his gestures, and other peculiarities, that were characteristical. I also clothed my servants with the same livery as his. Very little prudence was then required to manage the rest. Who would have mistrusted me ? For to make the deception complete, I wrote false letters for the Duke, and sent

sent them several days before my arrival there ; which obtained for me a good reception. I soon perceived, that they thought it a great honour to furnish me with jewels, and supply me with great sums of money. So fortunate a circumstance soon raised me to a state of affluence." —

" Incredible audacity ! — But was you not afraid of being discovered ? "

" Not in the least. Even those who had seen the Duke were deceived, and my extraordinary assurance was of great assistance to me. The real Duke too was at a sufficient distance to me not to discover the plot. Besides that, I did not give out directly, that I was the Duke himself ; but only made use of such favourable circumstances as would induce them to believe me to be him. I gave myself out for the Count Sta . . — This was the name under which the real Duke travelled—and they whispered to one another, that they were certain it was the Duke . . . but they did not choose to call me so to my face, because it was known that I travelled secretly, and that I did not stay in a place where I was known.

" Suppose, for instance, I suspected any one of treachery, it was very easy for me to change my appearance, and to make myself entirely unknown, which I could readily perform. In your own history you will find examples of it, which I omit here, to avoid being too circumstantial.

" As soon as I had collected my treasure, I took a journey into the country, under the pretext of paying a visit to one of my acquaintances. Having penetrated some way into the forest I was obliged to pass through, all about me was immediately changed, for every thing was prepared for that purpose. My carriage became of another form ;

my

my horses were changed from bays to black ; one of my servants sat by my side as my wife ; the others were entirely metamorphosed ; and I exchanged my title for that of major. It was impossible for any one to know me again ! For appearance sake, I left several of my servants and some large boxes behind me. They indeed knew not who I was, for I took them a few days before, for that purpose, into my service, and the trunks contained nothing of any value, by which the good landlord could satisfy himself for my account ; they were all filled with earth and stones.

“ That is vile !—But could you always trust your footmen, who were acquainted with your tricks, and were obliged to act their part in them ?—Were you not afraid of being betrayed by them ?”

“ They were all so much involved in my interest, that they feared the discovery as much as I did. And, besides, I had only cunning people in my service, such as understood the mere movement of my eye-balls, and who, before I engaged them, had been accustomed to deceit and rascality.—It was a long while before I could muster a tribe, to whom I could entrust the execution of my schemes ; and for that reason, I sent those into the other world, that I suspected. They enjoyed the best life that people of that description could wish for ! They had a superfluity of every thing. I very seldom troubled them with any business ; but when I did, it was of such a nature that they executed it willingly, for it cost them neither trouble nor drops of sweat. And as they could display great characters, mountebank tricks, and wonders, they were sure of not being discovered ; as they told me, that by those means they contrived to have

have themselves held in the highest respect. Believe me, Prince, those people were much attached to me, punctually fulfilled my smallest commands, and feared me so much, that I am not able to describe it. An angry look from me, made them tremble; and I ascribe this extraordinary fear to my deceptions, which I sometimes displayed before them; to instil into them the idea, that supernatural powers were at my command."

" But how easy might those people, whom you yourself call so cunning and artful, have experienced the contrary, if they had reflected, that you made use of them as instruments in the execution of your plans, when your influence with supernatural powers would have been sufficient?"

" This is a just observation. But consider for a moment, what an effect the miraculous produces, if it is skilfully managed. It is but natural to expect great things from him, whom we once have seen perform a miracle; at least we do not doubt the want of ability, but conclude, that he begins and ceases at pleasure. But you must consider, that I only gave my people inconsiderable characters to play; the capital part I performed myself; and they always found something extraordinary in their part, though they assisted me individually to finish the whole."

" I must confess, that you always acted with the greatest precaution. But I must go back to my former questions, one of which only you have answered to my satisfaction, namely: the way you got the large sums of money to defray the expenses of your plans. How you pleased the fanatic, and how you satisfied the revengeful and voluptuous, I can easily imagine; but what could the ambitious

ambitious expect of you, as you could not dispose of titles, or lucrative employments?"

" Very much, Prince; for before I applied to any one, and previous to my becoming closely connected with a person, (for I avoided carefully the appearance of seeking their friendship, and always contrived it so, that they sought for my acquaintance first,) I gave those persons such proofs of my power, that they were easily led to expect much from the connection. And we find no great difficulty in crediting every thing that tends to promote the accomplishment of our wishes. Extraordinary as it may seem, they sometimes obtained from me what I promised, though the difficulties that presented themselves were unbounded.

" It was not my intention to be so circumstantial in my account of this period of my life, but only to point out the consequences, which were produced by my actions;—but I read it in your countenance, gracious Prince, that you will not be satisfied with it; and I begin on that account the history of another part of my life, which of itself would make me notorious; though it ought to be thrown in the back ground, when compared to that which follows.

" The Court of *** which at that time took part in every war, and at the conclusion of it prescribed the conditions of peace, seemed to nourish some creatures, who would become useful to me, as soon as I wanted their assistance: with that view I travelled there.

" To discover those that could be at all useful to me in the executions of my plans, was my first endeavour. I had not long to seek for them; they soon presented themselves to me. These were the two first secretaries. Through their hands passed the

the most important matters that concerned the government. They were the oracles of the ministers, who troubled themselves with no other part of the business, than that of agreeing to the plans proposed to them by their secretaries ; and, if requisite, signing their names, although fame sounded their praise, and extolled their wisdom.

" In short, the first ministers, who had no other merit, than that of having sprung from ancient families, were decorated with the ribbands, and enjoyed the titles, whilst the secretaries performed the labour. You are astonished, but it is really the fact, though few had a knowledge of it : for the honourable and learned private Councillor, Baron had a pension, on account of his old age, which rendered him no longer capable, notwithstanding his great abilities, of transacting any business for the state. Those who were in office, had only to thank one person for their situation, who did not regard their being adequate to the station they filled ; but only, whether they had handsome features, and were well made. Some I must except, but they were either ambassadors, or had little influence in the cabinet.

" All the principal business fell upon the two secretaries ; and through them alone, the court obtained and augmented that dignity, which the before mentioned Baron had procured.

" It is incredible, what two men can perform, when placed in such a situation, if they act together. One passionately loved the lady the only daughter of the conference-minister ; and the other aimed at a lucrative sinecure. But as both their designs were thwarted, they, for that reason, became sincerely attached to each other. They were of plebeian birth ; and neither the lady, nor

the

the elevated situation could possibly be obtained for them, according to the arrangement. Their superiors would not suffer them to be too powerful, for fear it should depreciate their own authority. Those two men laboured with great industry, and yet neither of them could advance a step farther in the attainment of his object. The first secretary L... who was in love with the lady, thought of gaining her heart by his great merit and talents, and he was not entirely mistaken; for she valued superior abilities more than high birth. But how could she be aware that he was so accomplished a character, when all that he performed was attributed to the account of another? and the laws of etiquette hindered him from forming any other acquaintance with her, than that which some stolen looks procured him. He did not imagine, though the lady loved him sincerely, that she dared give him her hand; as she reckoned eighteen degrees of nobility! A dreadful idea, to connect eighteen degrees of birth with a plebeian of merit!—yet he did not despair.

" The other secretary D... had for many years faithfully exerted himself in his situation; he undertook the most important business, and accomplished it with credit: but he was continually disappointed, for all the vacant situations were given to strangers. They both had daily business together; and their bad fortune and repeated disappointments were the subject of conversation, and the cause of a very intimate friendship; which is, in such circumstances, very rare; for we generally wish to surpass each other, and instead of expressing real friendship, exhibit masks of hypocrisy. They justly considered, that, if there were a possibility to arrive at the summit of their wishes, it could only

only be brought about by their being united. And this at length happened. L . . . sought every opportunity to praise the talents of D . . . to his superior, and was only satisfied when D . . . (who was in great favor with the lady's father) spoke a good word in his behalf, on account of his beloved.

" Both were very near gaining their aim. L . . . was beloved by his girl; and, elevated with the idea, supposed, like lovers in general, that things might easily be settled after their union. D . . . also was on the point of obtaining an eligible situation as a counsellor, with the prospect of procuring a still better employment; when, behold, all suddenly fell to the ground.—And who brought this event about? It was I.

" I destroyed their plans, in order that I might restore them again to happiness, when it should seem to them totally impossible. I could then with the greater certainty rely upon their gratitude for my generosity.

" Observe how I undertook that difficult task, and how I persevered in it!

" Into the house of the lady's father I had long before acquired access. I assumed the character of an Italian Baron, by name *Vatifiello*, and gaming, which he was fond of, procured me a ready admittance to his table. To increase his esteem, I made use of no other method, than to let him always be successful when we played. He was weak enough not to see through this manœuvre; and I, with a most cheerful countenance, submitted to every thing that he proposed.—We were, when his business permitted, always together. I therefore became, in a great measure, necessary to promote his comfort. At his house I also contracted an intimacy with both the secretaries; and L . . . must acknowledge

acknowledge himself beholden to me for engaging the attention of the father, purposely, that he might entertain himself undisturbed with his beloved.

" This seemed the time for blowing up the mine, which I had so artfully constructed. It was necessary to render the courtship of the secretary with the old gentleman's daughter suspicious, without his being able to guess at my intentions.—This was admirably effected. The poor young lady very soon received positive orders from her father, to avoid the company of the secretary.

" She now could only weep in the solitude of her chamber over her misfortunes. L... was received coolly, when he came to the house; and too soon perceived the cause from which this treatment originated. He therefore discontinued his visits; and sought in vain to recover his lost repose in the silent path of retirement, where nought could disturb him in the hallowed pleasure of pouring forth the sorrows of his soul. Believe not, gracious Prince, that this is an addition of my own; no, the poor fellow had indeed, loved so passionately, that he was almost driven to madness, and could not apply any longer to business.

" D... did not obtain the promised situation, but was thrown into prison, because a document of consequence was missing, which had been put into his hands. He was suspected of having sent it treacherously to a foreign court.—Reflect, my Prince, how this circumstance must have operated upon the mind of poor L...; for he justly feared he should be involved in D's affair. This would indeed have happened, had I not suspected, that if I any longer delayed unraveling the business, it might in the end become a task of great difficulty, or,

or, at least, ultimately deprive me of what I expected to arise from my scheme.—On that account I hastened to accomplish all I had undertaken.

" I pursued the steps of poor L., . . . , in one of his solitary walks. For some time I could discover no traces of him. I ascended the steeps, and penetrated into the deepest part of the wood, at several points, before I found him. I was on the point of giving up the search, when I fortunately perceived him.—For the situation of his mind, he could not have chosen a more convenient spot, than that where I found him. Before his feet a silver stream glided silently along, supplied by a torrent that rose among the scattered shrub-crowned rocks, that ornamented the opposite shore, and in which were formed a variety of beautiful grottos. Over it there was a shelving precipice, which almost reached the bank on which he was sitting. It was barren, and produced only here and there a few little shrubs and moss. From the middle of it there issued a rivulet, which with pleasing murmurs united itself with the stream of the river. The sun still gilded with his setting beams the summits of the rocks, and impatiently the pale moon seemed to wait for the period, when she should resume the government, and shed her faint light on the rippling waves. The ravenous night-birds had left their haunts, and were wandering with hideous noise in search of prey.

" He was sitting upon the stump of a tree, covered with moss. His head was placed on his hand, and he apparently struggled with some horrid resolution. In his right hand he held a writing tablet. I silently drew nearer to him, and beheld the following words inscribed upon it.:

" Not

" Not to the dregs is the cup of sorrow emptied,
 " which was filled up to the brim. No : it falls
 " from my hand. Behind me—all is irrecovera-
 " bly lost ; before me—impenetrable darkness ;
 " within me—despair. No other path which
 " leads from this labyrinth of innumerable suf-
 " ferings, than through the gates of death.—Oh !
 " come then, come ! welcome friend !—Thy bro-
 " ken hour-glass is no frightful picture ; thy
 " horrible face seems to me the sweet smiling of
 " a bride before the altar—the voice of the des-
 " troyer sounds more charming to me, than the
 " most beautiful music on the long wished nuptial
 " day. Oh ! come then, and bring me, weary of
 " life, to the vaults of rest. Thou comest not ?
 " Then I will hasten to thee, who hast thy habi-
 " tation in every element, to whom every moment
 " of our lives brings us nearer.—

" In these waves, my beloved, I seek a period
 " to my sorrows, because my affection for thee is
 " unconquerable. My last breath will be employ-
 " ed in calling upon thy name ; and it will be first
 " repeated, when my tongue shall resume its pow-
 " ers again, roused by a sound which will pene-
 " trate even into the most profound depths."

" He started hastily up, lifting his clasped hands
 towards Heaven.—" Thou, O ! eternal God," he
 exclaimed, " wilt forgive me ; for thou art graci-
 " ous, and I am thy creature !—My beloved Con-
 cordia!"—He rushed, after uttering these words,
 precipitately towards the river—but I caught him
 in my arms.

" The fright, which my sudden appearance oc-
 casioned, threw him almost into a swoon ; but he
 soon recovered, and remained speechless for some
 time,

time, staring at me with great earnestness. I thought it best not to interrupt him, but to wait, and discover what would be the effect of such a sudden shock to his whole frame.

"I know not," said he at length, "whether I should thank you, or curse the moment in which it came into your mind, to visit this desert and frustrate my attempts, whilst I was willing to break the chain of my sufferings, which is become too heavy for me."

"When you know of what consequence it will be to you, then you will thank me."

"The gift of a joyless life. For that must I thank you?"

"You will thank me."

"Incomprehensible!—Can we thank him, who, when we are seeking for a thing with anxiety, returns us that which we threw away?—

"But if the thing were a diamond, which we had falsely imagined a worthless stone, how then?"

"I do not find myself in that situation. I was willing to throw aside a distressing burden, which you have again imposed upon me against my inclination."

"A distressing burden?—Is it possible that life can be despised by him, who sees himself on the point of obtaining the object of his wishes?—Impetuous man!—What joy, what happiness still awaits you; of all of which you would have deprived yourself, if I had not prevented your accomplishing the dreadful act of suicide."

"The object of my wishes near me?—Happiness still awaits me! Cruel sport!—And this from you, who are acquainted with my whole history?"

"You

" You are near the object of your wishes!—I am not sporting with your feelings. I have spoken the truth. But I had almost forgotten, that mortals, when hurried to despair, are devoid of reflection."

" And are you not a man?—Do you not feel the force of hope, the galling pangs of desire?—Does not inability remind you of your gross matter, when you would exert your faculties beyond their limits, and endeavour to fly to the boundaries of the atmosphere?"

" These are questions which your own shame will unravel to you."

" Did I not see you frequently, and with passion play with the father of my beloved?"

" Did I play with passion?"

" Is there left any other presumption, when we observe, that it becomes the daily business of a man?"

" Short-sighted mortal!—Not to trust me farther!—But I pardon you: however, mark this rule: if you see a wise man, according to your sentiments, act weakly or improperly, admit that he perhaps does it merely on account of its good consequences; for he acts like a prudent botanist, who nourishes noxious and poisonous plants, in order that he may extract from them an efficacious fluid."

" But, what do you want with me?"

" To make you happy. Listen to me without interruption, and answer merely my questions.—You are about to cut, with your own hand, the thread of your life, because you thought yourself unhappy, whilst you met with obstacles to your love!"

" Obstacles, which were unsurmountable—to remove which I employed all my powers, but I exerted

exerted them in vain. And is not this sufficient to make me unhappy?—Is not the largest and most magnificent building overthrown, when we sap the foundation on which it is supported?—And the history of my friend, will not that also add to my miseries?—Is it possible for me to escape the dangerous gulph into which he has fallen?—Will not my grief, on seeing an intimate friend in distress, sooner than make my innocence appear, render it more suspicious?—Leave me, or it will drive me to distraction, to find that a man be witness to all this, and (he shuddered) yet remain indifferent.”

“ I have heard you with patience. Your words are those of a man overpowered with calamities. If you had listened to me coolly, you would have been able to explain to yourself my unconcern, which seemed to you so much to deserve censure and reproof; but which arises merely from a conviction, that I can restore to you that which you think irrecoverably lost!

“ You! you restore me that again!—Alas, how willingly would I believe your words, if I were able!”

“ Well then acknowledge your incredulity, and be convinced of the fact!”

“ We arrived, during our discourse, before a coal-hut, sequestered amidst thick bushes, and by which a little rivulet ran; I conducted his steps to the door, almost without his knowledge. His beloved Concordia flew out of the hut, into the arms of her astonished L***.”

“ On what a good footing I stood with the lady’s father you know already, and his opinion of me was increased, when he saw that my sentiments coincided with his, namely, that the love

of his daughter must remain hopeless, because it was fixed upon a man, who, if even he had the merit of being learned, would, in spite of that, be a disgrace to his ancient family. He charged me, for that reason, to explain to his daughter this truth, and I was very willing to perform that task. Daily I conversed with the poor Concordia in secret, and I made use of every opportunity to make her more and more attached to her beloved; insomuch, that she at last promised me to venture every thing for him, rather than to lose him. On his account, she disregarded the inheritance and ancient family of her father.

" As I had also contrived to render abortive all the attempts of her beloved to speak to her, or to send her a letter, she impaired her health by incessant anxiety; and it was found adviseable to procure her a physician. He advised as I had suspected, frequent airings in a coach, and as soon as her strength would permit, to walk frequently. I was obliged to accompany her; and in one of our walks I discovered the coal-hut, and proposed it as a place of ambush for her, because they would be the least likely to find her in such a situation; and in the mean time we could arrange the business. She consented to my proposal, and flew thither, according to my advice, on a certain day, when her father was absent from home.

" In the mean time I sought for her lover. I fortunately found him not far from the spot, and brought him near to the hut, where, by the sudden appearance of his beloved, and the recollection of what I had before told him, I made an impression upon his mind that could never be effaced.—Every word that he spoke evinced how deeply he felt his sorrows.

" Their

" Their embraces lasted for a long time in the hut, which I observed from without, through a chink—then L*** rushed out, and threw himself at my feet.

" Pardon me," exclaimed he, " pardon me, that I did not believe your words. But how could I expect this from you, when I thought myself abandoned by every one?"

I raised him him up.

" Have I kept my word? said I, smiling. Have I fulfilled my promise?"

" Oh! magnanimous, noblest of men, forgive me!"

" Is your life still indifferent to you?"

" That you saved it, this Angel shall thank you."

" He brought forth Concordia, who, not recovered from the effects of her ecstasy, was still weeping for joy.

" A scene now ensued, which, if any thing could have operated upon my sensibility, would have had the desired effect. I saw two souls elevated to the height of happiness by my exertions, who idolized me with speechless affection and gratitude. I partook of their joy, and was thus more than rewarded for my trouble.

" As soon as the first intoxication of delight had subsided, the lady began to express much anxiety and fear, (so natural to virtuous women) for having ventured on such a perilous undertaking.—I stood near them, and listened to all they said.—They then reflected upon many things which could not previously have been thought of.

" They young lady who had conquered so heroically her attachment to her country, her love to her father, and her regard to his wealth, was now

troubled with the thought, whilst she held her beloved object in her arms, whither they should fly, and whence they should derive subsistence; for she had not taken with her, in her great haste, either money—or diamonds."

" Certainly not," said she, whilst she turned herself to me, and seized my hand, which she pressed suddenly to her lips; and every little cloud, which was before visible upon her countenance, disappeared immediately. " At the idea, the most horrid which could influence my mind, that my beloved could again be torn from me, I forgot, for some moments, that you were our protector, and would provide for us. Pardon the weak, the anxious maiden, who has placed such confidence in you."

" I could easily imagine, that in this uncommon confidence placed in me, which had now occupied the souls of this couple, fancy would do much—and I only waited to see this manifested, when I represented to them, in its most striking point of view, what they might expect from me, if that which seemed to them an impossibility had been brought about by my management.

" It is right," I began, " for you to trust me; and you have reason to expect more good fortune from him, who can give you more than even your most sanguine wishes would lead you to expect.—This very day, (for day began already to break) and before the moon rises again, you both shall be joined in wedlock by the hand of the priest, and pass in happiness through this transitory state; united, by the consent of your father, my dear Lady, who will give you, moreover, his paternal blessing to your bliss. To-day, also, before the sun shines in his meridian splendor, shall D*** be liberated

liberated from his imprisonment, and replaced in his situation with dignity and honour—and (turning to L**) which also awaits for you. I go to accomplish what I now promise: till I return, I request you to continue in this cottage."

" I left them in great astonishment, and flew, as hastily as possible, through the bushes, so that they believed (as they afterwards confessed to me) I had disappeared like a spirit, and I took care to favour the idea.

" I hastened to the residence of the lady's father, and immediately presented myself before him. He was sitting melancholy upon a sofa; being much alarmed by the flight of his daughter. All who had been sent after her, had come back without having been able to discover the place of her retreat. He reprobed his own obduracy in the most violent terms. Under the mask of a comforter, I was about going to acquaint him with what might probably happen; but he would not at that moment listen to my proposals; for he still spurned the thought of procuring the return of his daughter by giving her hand to a plebeian. I tried every method I could invent to induce him to abandon his prejudices; but before I could obtain my end, there came an officer with several soldiers to take up the minister as a state prisoner. He immediately intreated me in the humblest manner, to accompany him to his sovereign, who expected me, and had every where enquired for me. I followed him readily, as I had foreseen this; for it was part of my plan.

" From the manner in which the King received me, I could easily judge that he had a high esteem for me. He had related to me, that D***'s servant had

had absconded the foregoing night, and left a letter behind, which was shewn me. It was to this purpose :

“ Sir, the Secretary D** is innocent. The document which is wanting, I stole from him clandestinely, in the most roguish manner, and sold it to the Minister *** for a large sum of money; the greater part of which will be found in my trunk, as I cannot load myself with the wages of treachery. Repentance and anxiety persecute me every where. They seduced me to accomplish that wicked action ; and I confess with horror, that it was accursed avarice alone which prevented my discovering the villainy of such an infamous transaction, till the Baron Vatifiello last night appeared suddenly in my chamber, and warned me of the consequences. God only knows from whence he could have got the intelligence of it. He must be omniscient !—You may ask him ; an anxious desire to save myself will not let me remain at rest !

JOHN KLEINBART.”

“ I read it without emotion, although the eyes of the king were fixed upon me all the time.

“ Is this true ?”—he asked me.

“ I answered him by a look, whilst I assumed an air of superiority. He might have understood it, for he seemed ashamed, and thanked me for the service which I had rendered him in having preserved an innocent useful man.

“ He began after an interval of several minutes.

“ After what I have this day seen of you, you seem to me to be an uncommon man, of whom I know

know not how to form a correct idea ; but I believe you will be kind enough to answer me some questions."

" I have not forgotten, that when I enquired whether the account given in the letter were true, you seemed to be not quite satisfied. I was not induced through any suspicion to ask such a question ; but I wished merely for your confirmation of this extraordinary circumstance."

" And I believed, said I, that my looks would explain this better to your Majesty than many words.—'Tis the boaster only that speaks his own praise.—However, put your questions."

" To-day they found you at the Minister's, and you knew he was a traitor to his country."

" That he is not."

" But he has, however, bought the document, upon which so much depends."

" That he has not."

Enigmas, and nothing but enigmas !—However, the letter ?"

" O King ! all is not gold that glitters. The counsellor, who afterwards obtained the place, which was reserved for D**, bought the document, and designed to sell it again for a large sum to the enemy, as all depends upon it in the present war. Send to him. The messengers will find the paper behind his writing desk, and they will find him lying in bed, poisoned, as he thought it not advisable to live any longer by such iniquitous means. A letter in the right pocket of his dressing-gown, will unravel the mystery."

" The King looked at me with astonishment, and immediately gave such orders as I recommended. The messengers soon returned, and found every

every thing as I had described. His surprise then arose to the highest degree ; he shewed so much veneration for me, that he lost the power of speech, when he attempted to address me, as I looked at him.

“ The note the messengers found in the pocket of the Counsellor’s dressing-gown, was as follows :—

“ The Baron Vatifiello appeared to me last night, though my door was locked. How this was possible for him, I cannot comprehend, and still tremble to reflect upon it. He knows all about the document. He has commanded me to discover it; he has however, permitted me to do it by a letter, which I shall leave behind me, and to fly, if I wish to become better, and that I will now do !— Their cursed money I leave behind me !!—

“ In my letter I have accused the minister ***** of the crime ; this was done that I might not break the oath which I have sworn, that I would not betray you. But if your conscience will not induce you to liberate an innocent man, who suffers for you, the Baron will do it. Good God what a man must he be, who can discover such hidden secrets !

“ Save yourself if you can, but rescue your conscience from pain, and leave behind you such evidence as will prove the Minister an innocent man.

“ I know not how to remove my painful anxiety. Alas ! if I were but in security ! You alone are the cause of my misfortune, with your cursed money and your artful persuasions. I, who had such a good master, became his betrayer ! Oh ! that I were able to describe to you the hell which burns

burns in my bosom ! God will assist me !—Save yourself, or at least your soul. I can write no more, I must be gone.

JOHN KLEINBART."

" Secretary D**** and the Minister immediately obtained their liberty, and thanked me in the presence of the Monarch, who had attended with much emotion to these circumstances. He entreated me very much to stay with him, to be his friend and Counsellor in the administration of state affairs, but I refused it. My ambition would have been flattered by it, I acknowledge, but in such a situation I could not pursue the system I had adopted, and my prospects being infinitely superior to that of being a royal favourite, to his request I made the following answer .

" Your kingdom, my Sovereign is populous and extensive, but the other empires in the world are of equal magnitude. All of them have a demand upon me. Every where they need my powerful services. I dare not give you and your country that which I have taken from others. To be your favourite, or even vice-governor, would be limiting my power to too small a circle. I cannot now give a farther explanation of my conduct. Indeed if I were to endeavour to do so, you would not comprehend me. Do not press me to do that which I must refuse. If you will honour my memory, then follow my example : save innocence from oppression or seduction wherever you can, and make men happy who deserve it. I will at present give you an opportunity for so doing.

" Both your Secretaries, L** and D**, are the most deserving men in your court. You have hitherto known them too little. Follow my advice.

You will find in them men who deserve your patronage, and who will serve you with fidelity.—As soon as they are able, I will let you know it. For the present, let them both be your private counsellors. L*** loves the daughter of the Minister; command the hard-hearted father to give him his daughter's hand. They are destined for each other, their marriage is concluded in heaven; for that reason, neither rank nor power shall separate them !

“ The King willingly consented to all, and the Minister was too prudent a courtier not to be guided by the voice of his Sovereign rather than his own opinion. It was impossible for him to meet with a better fortune for his daughter, when he saw L**** was the King's favourite as well as mine, and contemplated the honourable employments which his son-in-law would arrive at.—It was then very easy for the King to complete the happiness of the father, by giving L*** a diploma for the number of petty degrees which he had required. He reflected, however, that his daughter and L**** were gone, and he bewailed his loss to the King.

“ Do not question me concerning them, (I interrupted him) my actions are secret, they are impenetrable to men—very often they seem contradictory, and I am covered with the dark veil of mystery. In a short time both will be here..”

“ My daughter here !” exclaimed the Minister,
“ my daughter !”

“ I made no reply, but threw myself into my coach, which was ready for me, and soon arrived at the hut, where I met the lovers. I say nothing of their ecstasy, when I delivered to them the unexpected news.

“ My

" My seriousness alone determined them from pressing me to death, out of love and veneration; and immediately upon my arrival with them in the King's saloon, a priest gave them the matrimonial benediction.

" Tell me yourself, gracious Prince, had I not reason to expect fidelity and gratitude for such an act of generosity?—Purposely had I conducted the business so, that their future happiness must depend upon me; and they were, for that reason, obliged to endeavour to secure a continuance of my favour.

" Did I not also shew myself to them in such a manner, that they must think me the most perfect and best of mankind, from whom nothing could be expected but acts of goodness?—You must have observed how firmly even the King believed every thing, and what in cases of exigency might I not hope from him, who saw that my conduct was quite disinterested, being merely careful for the welfare of others?

" And to enforce these impressions so much the more, I absented myself suddenly from ***d*** without the knowledge of any person; and that they might not discover any trace of me, I went off in a dress in which nobody had seen me before, in order to make the people believe (which really happened) I had disappeared.

" And now hear, in what a natural manner I worked all those seeming wonders.

" One of my people had, before I arrived at ***d***, been engaged in the service of Secretary D*****, and thus, by him, I obtained a knowledge of all before-hand. He was the pretended John Kleinbart. Pursuant to my command he stole the document,

document, which was not difficult for a man like him. I was obliged to have a person to hire him for that purpose, and he could not remain alive, because he could have proved his innocence by discovering the fact. Nobody was more fit for that than the Counsellor. John had a love-intrigue with his female-cook, and was often in the house when the Counsellor was absent. I made use of this favourable circumstance. It was very easy for John to put the document, the evening before, behind the writing desk, and to convey the letter, written by me, into the pocket of the Counsellor's dressing-gown. And, in order to kill him, nothing more was requisite than to put a powder into the drink he was accustomed to take before he went to bed, and which stood ready prepared for him against he came home.

" The reason why I acted in the manner described, and caused the Minister to be suspected, you will, without asking me, very easily perceive; for those were the only proper means to display my powers.

" All the purposes which I wished to accomplish, will now be manifest: so clearly will they appear, that I may now be entirely silent.

" Nor need you ask me in future, how it was possible for me to attach indissolubly to my interest the best and most prudent men, and afterwards to persuade them to do any thing that I wished.

" And now," continued the Armenian, " I was approaching that period, when, as I before said, my views were guided by a settled plan. What I had hitherto accomplished was (except acquiring an acquaintance with several courts, and a degree of influence in them) often nothing more than a continual chain of deceptions, by which I endeavoured

voured to gain creatures, and to acquire credit in their eyes. I too soon perceived that my absence from any place, very soon effaced the impression which I had left there. To my terror did I discover, that the ties of gratitude for certain services I had rendered, which I thought had united so many to my interest, were not so strong as I had reason to expect, as soon as the evident advantages which I had procured for them ceased. I must, however, here except my creatures in **d**.— There every circumstance had been favourable to me. They could never discover in my actions any thing more than the noblest and most virtuous design that ever entered the mind of men, who never wished any thing contrary to their duty, and who were unacquainted with all my shameful expedients. But how seldom was I so fortunate! I was often obliged to appear despicable to them, when they saw their criminal plans brought to a conclusion by my means, and they hated me, though they did not shew it openly, perhaps from fear.

“ From my own experience, alas! I learnt that a villain is not loved by his fellow; and that those ties which bind the hearts of others with such firm affection, are to them unknown. What causes them to unite together?—What renders them inseparable from one another?—What makes one submissive to the other?—Nothing more than self-interest. If this should be once satisfied, all bonds would break, and each would, with indifference, see the downfall of his companion and rejoice, if he could derive a profit from it.

“ That a profligate abandoned man can respect those virtues which he despises, I know from my own example, although I carefully stifled every impulse

impulse towards it; but that those who pursue a system of immorality cannot love the man who follows the same path, and adopts the same principles, was incomprehensible to me.

" I said it was always incomprehensible to me. Now, alas, I see too late, the true value of virtue, which I once considered as imaginary: virtue, which alone can make us happy; which alone can fill the heart of another with love for us; which—oh, I never knew what real joy was since iniquity enslaved me. How can an abandoned wretch enjoy happiness?—It is virtue alone that influences the heart to revere her tender sentiments. I once had delighted in the contemplation of her charms, but knowing my depravity, she abandoned me.—Ah! I have loved, Prince, I have loved; but I soon found that the enchanting pleasures of this passion were only to be possessed by untainted souls; they were too pure for mine. Without remorse I sacrificed the happiness of an angel, and smiled with triumph at her sorrows. She followed me in all my wanderings, clung to my knees, entreated, prayed, wept at my feet, and I with indifference plunged a dagger into her breast, and destroyed at once the hopes of our embraces!"

" But away with it! away with it! I cannot think; of what use is repentance?"

" Mercy," added the Count D'O . . . , " is so peculiarly the property of tender minds, that we were yet deceiving ourselves, in causing this Armenian, the most detestable of wretches, to partake of its blessings. We beheld his repentance, and our eyes overflowed with tears of affliction for his conduct. We forgot ourselves so much, as to endeavour to comfort him by religion, and made use of

of every argument in some measure to soothe him. His apparent attention encouraged us, and we collected every thing which could contribute to our purpose. We wished to insist upon his forbearance for the sake of virtue, but he burst out into a most horrid laugh, and bit his chains. The imprecations against religion, and every thing sacred, which flowed from his vivid lips, evidently shewed how strongly he felt the want of them; and how much all consolation arising from them increased his despair.—All this made a strong impression upon the Prince. As soon as the Armenian was conducted away, which was immediately, he fell upon his knees, and returned thanks to God, for having ordained every thing in such a manner, that it convinced him what a treasure his religion was, which he had wished to reject in exchange for the wretched principles of scepticism.

“ But his prayer did not inspire him with that cheerfulness, which alone can give strength to an innocent and suffering soul. His eyes seemed to betray a confession of offences, which he had been guilty of, to which his former irreligiousness had led him, and an anxious melancholy clouded his brow, and riveted his eyes to the ground.

“ Suffer not thyself, O man! who art reading this, when, perhaps, my bones, reduced to dust, are quietly reposing in the bosom of the earth, till the great day of the resurrection,—suffer not thyself to be robbed of thy religion, thy greatest treasure, which will lead thee through the world in security. Consider him who would snatch it from thee as an enemy who wishes to murder thy rest, and flee from him. Trust not alone to the light of reason, which thy beneficent Creator hath awarded thee, that thou mightest be able to distinguish the good

good from the bad, and pursue the straightest way to virtue. Since he is the God of truth, trust in him. Do not give thyself up entirely to thy own judgment; for how soon mayest thou err! Learn this from the example of the unfortunate Prince. He became, from an arrogant reliance upon his reason, and an unbounded confidence in his own abilities, so indescribably miserable, that his former tranquillity and cheerfulness never returned. Impress this truth, O christian! strongly upon thy mind, *that religion alone can lead us securely through the valley of death.* By it is the grave deprived of all its terrors—by it does death become a friend, who opens for us the door of eternal happiness. Without it, every thing vanishes into darkness and desolation, we are seized with terror and dismay. Religion alone can make the beneficent gift of reason, that image of the deity, a blessing to us. He who hopes to be happy, and rests securely without religion, resembles a traveller, who perversely quits the direct road, where guides would prevent his foot from erring, and by following the path which he himself hath chosen, is lost in an impassable country, where his cries cannot reach the ear of a deliverer, and thus he at length irretrievably sinks into an unforeseen abyss.

“ Had I not been previously convinced of these truths, I should have been so now from the sight of the Armenian. O! that all men, who are about to adopt erroneous opinions, had been present when the Armenian spoke. They must have been captivated by religion, and her daughter virtue, and inspired with the warmest attachment to them. Nothing, probably, ever placed their love-lines, and the certainty with which they reward their adherents, in so strong a light as the conduct
of

of this Armenian, whose words alone I cannot relate without shuddering with horror.

" When the Armenian was brought, the following day, to the Prince, he was in the same disposition as before. Not the least trace, by which one might judge of what had happened, was perceptible.

He continued :

" The coolness towards me, which I observed in so many of my companions, as soon as they perceived I could no longer assist them, induced me to contrive a method which attached them to me more firmly, and united them in my own interest. Such a method I very easily discovered.

" At that time the order of stood in very high esteem, and contained members of every rank, religion, and manner of thinking. That members of every persuasion could adhere so closely to this order, naturally led me to conclude, that every one either must derive advantage from it, though this seemed incredible, or that the retreat from it might be dangerous. Both these effects I designed at times to turn to my advantage, and without further hesitation I became a member.

" The fundamental principle of this order was to augment the number of members as much as possible, and by that means to obtain a great influence in all external departments, and even to procure the direction in some. Only the superiors were acquainted with this, and it was difficult to obtain their degree. Every one of the under-graduate members represented to himself a different object to this superior degree, according to his individual situation, and as his manner of thinking induced him. A solemn oath was required, binding them not to divulge a syllable of what related

to

to the order; and every member of it was confounded by the thought, that he had made a progress farther than another, without communicating it to his brother.

" A general equality of sentiment being introduced, nobody considered that he was a mere instrument in the hands of others; and this equality was alone sufficient to attract the plebeian, when he thought himself in this society united with many great men. Figurative language and pretended wisdom, for appearance sake, veiled in symbols and characters pleased the fanatic, who wished anxiously to pass beyond the boundaries of human knowledge. Humane actions influenced the noble, and opened the hands of the rich and powerful to extensive charity, and curiosity frequently induced many persons to enter into the order.

" The strong inclination of the greater part of mankind to a mystical union, made them desirous of joining this society, though it stood not in need of members. Their number was called a legion. To preserve them, no additional manœuvre was wanted; and their defection was prevented by many methods; and even if that should have happened, it could not be of any material injury to the order.

" Unwearied with every possible endeavour and exertion, I sought to push myself forward, and I at length succeeded, and became one of the leaders. I was elected to that employment with the greatest solemnity; and it was then that I discovered the real views of the society, which before that period were not quite clear to me. A small tablet of silver, with black letters engraved upon it, acquainted me with the motive of its institution. The contents were as follow :

“ Let the dominion of good be the object of pursuit ;
 “ and the continual endeavour to become better, be the
 “ daily labour of yourself and your brethren. Secrecy
 “ and darkness secure the good, and prevent the wicked
 “ from obstructing their proceedings.”

“ Do not believe that this grand object, which seemed so entirely irrelevant to my principles, deprived me of my courage, although I had not expected it. My first thought was, that every thing might be conducive to my benefit by well managed proceedings. And I therefore endeavoured immediately to gain the most exalted opinion among my brethren.

“ One grand principle of the order was, to raise its members, who were known as good and useful subjects, to the highest places in the state. Nothing could be easier than this, and by such means to place every one in that department which he best understood, and was most worthy of ; from which he might succeed to others by degrees, from the lowest to the highest, so that all might be governed by members of our order, which would enable us to attain our object the sooner.

“ Twice every year the superiors met together in different places. There they communicated to each other the experience which they had acquired. The members were then proposed and examined, and they that were found fit for employments, soon obtained them.*

“ As much precaution was prescribed by the laws in respect to the choice of the superiors, and

* That people may not suspect, that I mean the order of masonry, I solemnly declare that it is not the case ; for this still exists, while the other by its infamous conduct was destroyed.

as many conditions were necessary in order to obtain places of consequence, it was very soon evident to me, that I had not obtained my situation by undue influence. Many had nothing more in view than the gratification of their vanity, and under the pretence of working for the order, were satisfied with having obtained their wishes. And I perceived with pleasure, that the majority of the superiors of that order were not at all interested in promoting the virtuous; their only object was to govern. To bring them over to my side, without discovering to them my plan, was a very easy task.

" And now my game was won. Almost all places were either given away by me, or at my intercession; and I saw very soon all the places filled by people, who only waited my suggestion in order to communicate to me all which could be serviceable in accomplishing my plans. My power was now very far extended; and I may reasonably suppose, that what I have already communicated to you, will enable you to understand me in future without further explanation, as soon as I mention that order: without it I never could have reached those situations which by its means I arrived at.

" In the mean time the Regent . . d . . died. During the government of his predecessor many changes happened. From one of my associates there, I obtained the following letter in hieroglyphics:

" The creatures of the present Regent . . d . . raise up their heads in grandeur. They always surround their master, and know how to please him in such a manner, that he listens to all their proposals with blind confidence. All is changed; and merely from a national hatred, it is in contemplation to break off an alliance, of which our court

was

was so proud till this period, and without which, we shall not long be able to avoid a bloody war."

" Both the prime ministers L . . . and D . . . (they procured that employment by my recommendation, added the Armenian) are dismissed, and have been beheaded in their prisons. The haste with which this was performed, did not permit an enquiry into the crime which was imputed to them ; and the secrecy in which all is enveloped, scarcely leaves us room for conjecture. I believe that something of a serious nature was alleged against them, which irritated so much the passion of . . . d . . . , that the idea of coolly enquiring into the business did not once occur to him.

" The Count P . . . , who is now at Rome, as ambassador, has received orders to return as quick as possible. His employment is given to another, and he has a more advantageous one. The . . . d . . . , whose heart he possesses, waits with the utmost anxiety for his arrival. He has made him his private minister, and all is in expectation on his account.

" The exactness and care which I observe in writing to you nothing but what is really true, and the great haste with which I proceeded to deliver all this into your hands, makes me wait with eager expectation your further commands, and it will, I flatter myself, meet your approbation.

CHARLES."

" This Charles was by birth a frenchman, and one of my principal confidants ; his talents having fitted him for that purpose.

" Scarcely had I read the letter, when I threw myself into my carriage, and travelled day and night, that I might arrive speedily at Rome. I soon

soon became acquainted with the Count P , and found in him exactly such a man as I wished for. To bring him into the order of * * * was very easy, because he was long before inclined to it. If I dare call the connection of common interest, friendship, there soon took place between us an intimate friendship. I discovered to him a part of my plan, and he swore faithfully to assist in fulfilling it, for which I promised to help him to the * * d * * throne; though this was in truth not my serious intention. I need not relate to you, that I magnified my influence, and by the adroitness, and mystery of my words and actions which I displayed, I acquired his entire confidence.

" I was still in doubt which empire I should make the object of my government. Soon after I discovered circumstances that induced me to relinquish my former choice. I looked for the favourable moment that should direct my power; and for the present, I was satisfied with augmenting the number of my partisans.

" This favourable moment was nearer than I thought, and all my undertakings became a settled point upon which they could direct themselves.

" Besides the intimacy of Count P , I had the good fortune, on account of this journey to Rome, to find again my foster father by a curious accident, by means of which I learned likewise the secret of my birth.

" His continual employment in his laboratory, and the neglect of his patients, had brought him into the most unpleasant situation. The proprietor of the house in which I resided, and who was formerly a physician, maintained him out of compassion. Chance procured us an interview. I found no difficulty in recognizing him immediately, for

for his physiognomy was not altered, and it had made such an impression on my mind, that I should have known him among a multitude of men.

" On a former occasion, it was neither my intention to seek for him, nor to make myself known to him, and this was the case now; although I saw the poor old grey-beard standing before me, who so much wanted my assistance. I exulted in the firmness of my principles, which were not shaken even by the sight of a father; and which suffered not my heart to indulge the least emotion of tenderness.

" It happened that my foot slipping, I fell down a stair-case; I remained lifeless for some time, and when my senses returned again, I found myself laid in a bed, under the care of my foster-father; besides whom nobody was present. I looked at him with surprise, and then apparently meditated upon something, the nature of which he could not discover.

" What has happened to me," I exclaimed angrily, " that I find myself alone with a man, from whom I ought always to fly, because he could discover the lowliness of my birth?"

" A fall from a stair-case—your fit—I assisted you—I opened your shirt collar."

" I shall recompense you for that.—Where are my people?"

" I contrived to have them absent, because—."

" And how did you dare to do it? Let them come up immediately; I command it. Ring the bell.

" His knees trembled, tears gushed from his eyes.—" Do you not know me?"

" What a question! Ring the bell!" And in the mean time I jumped out of the bed, and was going

going to ring it myself. He put himself in my way.

" For God's sake, let me have but a few minutes. I am, indeed, Sylvio, and you are my Ferdinand. Are then the traces of my face become entirely strange to you? Does your happiness and fortune not permit you to indulge the pleasing recollection and acknowledgment of your father's love?"

" You are mad, fellow," I exclaimed, and pushed him from me, whilst he endeavoured to embrace me.

" Behold the mark on your neck; by it you were made known to me, when I opened your shirt collar during your fit. Oh! let me not in vain have thanked God, that he has enabled me to find you, and given me an opportunity of presenting to you your real father, who sighs for embraces. Oh! if there arise not in your breast any sentiments of gratitude for me, be attentive at least to your own advantage, and force not him from you, who is the only person that can relate to you the secret of your birth, and can help you on that account to an immense fortune."

" You were then no deceiver?" said I in order to maintain the character which at present I ought to act.

" Oh! did not your heart tell you this immediately?—However I forgive you; who knows what deceits may have hardened it, so that—

" Yes, dear father," I pressed him to my bosom.—It was by no means difficult for me to shed a few tears, when the old man mingled his with mine.—" Oh! there are villains among mankind." I went on. " I have been deceived by one to whom I entirely sacrificed my friendship, and

and whom I charged to seek after you, because I could not, by inquiry, obtain any account of you, and my business did not permit me to undertake this agreeable journey myself. The monster! He abused my confidence, and instructed a rascal, who acted the part of my father. My childish heart was easily deceived, and I embraced him with affection. But by a lucky circumstance, I discovered that he aimed at my life and fortune, so that they might divide the spoil among them. Yet he entirely owed his existence to me! Oh! father, how difficult it is to believe always in the Almighty!***** For by the treatment I had experienced, I was almost rendered a complete misanthrope."

"The old man willingly believed my stories, and his eyes overflowed with tears of joy.

"Yes," cried he in an ecstasy, "you are my Ferdinand. The falsehood and deceit you have experienced in the world, could only give you the appearance of an enemy of human kind, but your heart remained noble. Oh! how your father will be rejoiced; for the only wish which glows in his bosom is, that he may live to see you again."

"You were not my father!" said I, shedding a fresh stream of tears. "Yes, I deserve now to be cast from you."

"Not so my son. I only was your foster father, and that is sufficient for me, although you absconded. But enough of that, I now have you again!—Read this letter."

* Many such expressions I have omitted. In the mouth of such a diabolical villain they seemed to me to be blasphemy.

*Note of Count O ***.*

" MY DEAREST SYLVIO,

*Venice, Aug. 6, 17***

" I have wronged you by my reproaches. I now know that you are innocent. Though I have lost my son, it was not your neglect or harshness that induced him to run away. Alas! forgive the oppressed heart of a father, which led me to treat you rigorously.

" I thought I should make my son happier than his equals; that he might shine and soar above all others! God has punished my pride severely; though my punishment is milder than I deserved. Oh! that my son were still alive, and could be restored to me again!—That thought drives far away the long cherished idea of death, which otherwise I could embrace with pleasure. It is this alone which keeps my almost stagnant blood in motion. It is this alone which nourishes my soul.

" Could I but once more behold my beloved son, then would I fill his hands with immeasurable riches, with which the goodness of heaven has blessed me, who am so unworthy, and which I preserved but for him, my only one. Could I but lay my trembling hands upon his head, to impart my blessing, and might he with gratitude close my fading eyes; then after my death, every one would bless my name for the sake of such a son.

" My old feeble head, thou wilt be obliged without that consolation, without that happiness, soon to lay thy grey hairs in the grave.

" But,

" But, Sylvio, is it the feebleness of old age or presumption? I cannot yet give up my hope. Do not spare any trouble to find him out.—Willingly I would then—O! what would I not—bear all your guilt, nay, were it the greatest, I would suffer for it in your stead in purgatory.

MISCARINI."

" It was not the desire of my heart to see my father, but the idea of obtaining his fortune, and other plans which I had already in view, that induced me to hasten my journey to Venice.

" Sylvio was obliged to send a letter before me, in order to prepare the way for my sudden appearance, and to procure me a welcome reception.

" My father embraced me with ecstacy, and the feebleness of his old age seemed to leave him. I played the part of a tender affectionate son, and endeavoured to render light the burdensome embraces of this disgusting grey-beard, by the thought of his fortune, and its accomplishing my plans already laid.

" But as soon as I saw that his palsied head would induce him tenaciously to attack my religious principles, which some of my papers (which his curiosity led him to open) had discovered to him, and that he wished to make me a fanatic, I began to perceive that even the little time he had to live would be of too long continuance. He could be of no more service to me, and was a barrier in the way of my undertakings; why should I wear longer the mask, when I could expect no further profit by so doing?

" Better, I thought, that the old tree should make room for the young one, that it might gain

more strength : and of this my father reaped the profit, for I suffered him not to struggle long with a painful death. In a sweet slumber I sent him to a better world, after having dispatched Sylvio his bosom friend."

" Good God !" exclaimed the Prince, " how ! is it possible for a man to murder his father ! "

" You should say *in cool blood* ; this alone distinguishes me from all those who perhaps have committed such an act in the heat of passion. Indeed I could have spared him, had he not by his irresistible curiosity opened some of my papers, by which a part of my plans and manner of thinking might have been betrayed. He could have no confidence in my words, for he, with the help of Sylvio, usurped the authority of a father. He even began to command, to admonish, to threaten. Prince, I could not bear a superior, who began to interrupt my course ! And had I not to fear that his complaints of me would lay me open to suspicion, and by that means injure my reputation, as many thought me a pattern of sanctity ?

" The coward only trembles at obstacles which appear insurmountable.—I was wont to break through them."

" Every nerve of my frame," added the Count O. . . , " now shuddered from an over-powering complication of terror and grief. It was to me, as if my soul, filled with detestation, laboured powerfully to destroy the limits of its habitation, in order to flee from this more than infernal malice-breathing outcast. My eyes were fixed in my head —though deeply oppressed, my heart throbbed—my breast seemed to deny respiration, and a cold sweat spread all over me."

The Armenian remained with steadfast looks, and seemed

seemed to view with a contemptuous smile our horror at his situation. No signs of repentance were discovered in his countenance, in which we might have hoped to trace the feelings of a man.

At length he proceeded in his narrative.

" I continued but a few months at Venice, as a great many young patricians pressed around me, each of whom earnestly endeavoured to gain my friendship. My family and fortune gave me frequently a right of pre-eminence, which I made beneficial without appearing to assume more than was due to my situation.

" I discovered with pleasure, that many had already conceived an unextinguishable hatred against the government, and which became more bitter, whenever they endeavoured to suppress it, and therefore so much the more dangerous. All circumstances united for the accomplishment of my plan. Venice was to be overthrown by me, and upon its ruins was to be laid the foundation of my throne and government. To rise much higher would be no difficulty, could I but gain one step from my present situation. In this thought I was daily more and more strengthened. Each day convinced me, that in no place could my plan be so well executed as here, where I found all things prepared for my purpose. A great part of the nobility were dissatisfied with the tyranny of the government, most of the provinces sighed under the greatest oppression; the mob were like blades of corn, easily agitated and put into motion; nothing was wanted but to make use of all these favourable circumstances.

" From what I had already heard and known of the government of Venice, I found it necessary to use the utmost precaution, and to proceed with the greatest

greatest care in every thing that I was about to undertake. I observed these rules the more, as they had been already a kind of law within me; they therefore gained me much attention and respect. I endeavoured by many means which I employed to discover, nay to extort, the sentiments of every one (which is very difficult here) without giving them the least hint concerning mine.

" But carefully as I thought I had concealed every thing from the eyes of the public, some, however, had looked further into my character than I supposed.

" In disguise, and wrapped up in deep contemplation, I walked upon the platform of Saint Mark. It had just begun to grow dark, when a party of bungling musicians came and surrounded me. I thought that this was nothing more than a common diversion ; but I had deceived myself. The kind of romance which they sung seemed to have allegorical reference to myself. Little as this might be perceived by any other person, the meaning of it did not escape my observation. I was willing to consider it as accidental, when one of their company pressed close to me, and put a paper secretly into my hand, whilst the others began to sing :

" Hide it," said he, " cautiously, and take care
 " that no one discovers it ; else thou wilt lay,
 " to-morrow, stretched at length in thy
 " grave."

" These words, which were sung by a woman, disguised as a fairy, did not escape my attention ; and on account of the emphatical manner in which they were repeated, they made a deep impression on my mind. I put the paper into my pocket, and went immediately home.

" As

" As quickly as possible I opened the letter, and read as follows :

" Friend or Foe, it will entirely depend upon yourself, which of these names shall be applied to you by us for the future. For your own benefit we wish that it may be the former ; and now hear our request. We all are dissatisfied with the government, which hitherto has tyrannized over our country, cruelly oppressed its most noble subjects, and recompensed its most sincere friends with shameful ingratitude. Prerogatives, that in other countries are the right of every honourable patriot, which the enraptured poet makes the object of his sublimest strains, and thus transmits them to posterity, of what benefit are they here ? They only lead the victim to a disgraceful punishment.—Is not this calculated to banish from our country all greatness of mind, and to destroy every incentive to magnanimous actions ?

" How often has the greatest general that drew his sword to revenge his country's wrongs fallen a victim to prejudice, whilst he was the friend of liberty ! How often has the greatest statesman been sacrificed to the lowest intrigues and meanest jealousy !

" Our history is fraught with examples of this kind, every one of which will be an infamous stain upon our character, and must render us contemptible in the eyes of every stranger.—And shall we longer support this evil when it is in your power to relieve us ?

" We delight in the idea of freedom, though the faintest shadow of it cannot be found among us !—Are not all our steps watched by numberless spies ? Do they not catch at every syllable ? And do we not often become a prey, even though we possess

possess the greatest innocence, to the despotism of those abandoned creatures?—Does not the blood of our brethren and relations, which was spilt by that never-sated lust of murder, which they call-state-prudence, cry aloud for revenge?

“ Ferdinando, from the noble race of Miscarini, need we tell you more? Does not your blood boil within you? Are not such insults to common sense sufficient to drive a man mad?—Can your country be indifferent to you?—And will not the blood of your relations move you?

“ We dreamt of freedom—we awoke, and the picture which fancy had pourtrayed disappeared. Real liberty shall occupy its place, or an eternal sleep, at least, shall procure us an eternal dream; where the ideal picture, to which we sacrificed our freedom, shall perpetually stand before our eyes.

“ There is a great party of us, linked by an indissoluble tie, and ready to meet death, or live like men; our numbers will increase, for our voices will rouse many from an apparent state of stupor, who will immediately see their error.

“ Courage inspires us all—large sums of money are in our hands;—a prudent leader only is wanting. Ferdinando, will you be that person?

“ Your high rank, together with your judgment, induce us to make this request. We are more acquainted with you than you perhaps imagine. A peculiar circumstance has given us the information—(only us alone.) We well know the history of the various events, which by your management occurred to both the Secretaries at *** d ** *. It is as incomprehensible to us as your conduct, and on that account you are our man.

“ We

" We hope you will not hesitate to accept our invitation ; for you are, perhaps, not so much a stranger here, as not to know that by our excellent government we can effectually employ the assassin's dagger. We could have made use of it, but we confide in you, of which this letter is a proof.

" If you accept of our offer, as we scarcely doubt that you will, then let your apartment be illuminated at midnight. Yet it is requisite that you should be alone. You shall then hear more from us. Till that time you will be closely observed.

" The business requires great foresight, and on that account, with anxious hope, we name ourselves, merely,

Your

FRIENDS."

" Nothing could be more desirable to me than the receipt of such a letter. I must confess that it overcame me at first. However I had prepared every thing, being in expectation of such an offer, for I knew many of the nobility were dissatisfied. But that this invitation would be given me so soon, exceeded my expectation.

" The enthusiasm that was displayed in the letter, delighted me so much, that I read it several times over ; for experience had long since taught me what to expect from men who were actuated by such motives. These only ought we to make use of, and they may be managed as we please. I could pretty nearly guess who the authors were, and with great impatience I waited for the appointed midnight hour.

" It arrived. My sensations were directed to something solemn, and even the clocks seemed to

found differently from what they usually did. I thought it a kind of premonition of what might happen in future.

" Suddenly the door flew open, and a form very much disguised stood before me.

" Ferdinando Miserinini, are you resolved? said the form, with a deep expression and seriousness of voice.

" I am!" I replied.

" Then follow me."

" I was obliged to wrap myself up in black, and we went off. As soon as we came to the canal, we found a boat for us; he blind-folded me, and when he took the bandage from my eyes, I found myself in the Hall, to which you both were once brought.*

" About twenty black masks rose from their seats, and bowed respectfully, whilst my companion brought me nearer to them, and addressed them in the following words:—

" He is resolved—he belongs to us."

" You are then resolved to belong to us, in order to fulfil our demand? said one of them who occupied the first place.

" I am."

" And your resolution is not premature? Is it firm?"

" It is; for ever."

" And you will not repent?"

" I am a man."

" And if, by being linked with us, the most shameful, the most tormenting death should be your lot, and you could even by treachery revenge

* See Vol. I.

yourself,

yourself, and procure riches and honours, what would you do?"

" Does there need such a question? Let them slowly boil me in hot oil, and even extract the marrow from my bones, and pierce me with red hot irons: I should be silent!"

" Then swear," they all exclaimed at once; and this I did with all the solemnity possible. Whilst kneeling, they all pointed their naked daggers towards my breast. They swore obedience to me in the like manner, because I earnestly desired it from them. They then snatched off their masks and exclaimed,

" Welcome, welcome, Ferdinando Miserinī; welcome the chief of our band."

" And now," said I, " attend to this your sacred duty. Be careful in every word which you utter, and in every step you intend to take, to avoid every clandestine conversation. Moderate the just revenge which burns within your breast, till the period arrives which I shall fix upon; it may then burst forth like a rapid overwhelming torrent.— Will you do so?"

" We will."

" I shall do all, even what your most sanguine expectations can suggest; but till then, I again repeat, patience and obedience!"

" I now diligently sought to gain the confidence of my fellow conspirators, or rather my subjects; and each day gave me new proofs how well I succeeded.

" One of my principal objects now was, to extend as much as possible the order of * * *. There was scarcely an employment or situation but what was filled by some of its members. The good fame of the order had already been of great advantage

age to many of my plans; and they rejoiced to find me a representative of it. They came in multitudes to be received by me, and thought it a mark of honour to wear its official symbols.

" The considerable fees of entrance which were paid by the wealthy, and the extraordinary contributions which the members gave, united with my large income, not only enabled me to live with the greatest splendour, in order to obtain my views, and to purchase the assistance of poor people, whom I wanted very much; but I even saved considerable sums.

" I do not choose to say any thing to you of the meetings of the order, for it does not belong to this place. They were repeated weekly, and I never failed to encourage the conspirators to persevere in the exalted ideas they had already formed. You will also imagine, that I accounted for the expenditure of the money, which I obtained in the order, as contributing to the honour of the society, although I spent it merely to gratify my own desires, and to further the designs of the principal conspirators.

" It was one of our most rigorous laws, that every thing was to be discovered to the chief of the order, to prevent surprize or misfortunes. This circumstance I turned to very great advantage. Treaties, and all secrets which had the least connection with me, or with the order, I cautiously applied to assist our designs. No oath of secrecy was so great and solemn, but it would have been broken for that purpose; no person was spared; any one was dispatched immediately, when the order had reason to be suspicious of his integrity. And there was not one among the whole society, who would not with pleasure have stabbed that

man

man to the heart, whose death-warrant I had signed in the name of the order."

" This astonishes me exceedingly," observed the Prince, " surely the order must have greatly suffered by it, if they encouraged their members so often to commit murders ? "

" The riddle is so easily explained, that I wonder you can require this now from me. How many have been assassinated by monks without their influence and authority being diminished by it ! And how was this accomplished ? They made it a cause of religion, and I made ours the cause of the order, and zeal for the benefit of the community. Can you not readily conceive, that he whom I commanded to be murdered, I carefully represented to the assassin as a villain who did not deserve mercy, or we should willingly have granted it ? I always employed people for that purpose, upon whose secrecy I could depend. Under such circumstances, an inviolable secrecy was preserved, the pious members of the order knew not a syllable of it, and the numbers increased daily."

" But did not such a society awaken the suspicions of the state ? "

" In that respect, the order was advantageously circumstanced. I took care that no proceeding was made known, from which a bad opinion of it could have been fairly inferred. The many benefits which the order conferred upon the poor, and which were bestowed sometimes for appearance sake, at others for the promotion of my plans, could not be hurtful to the state. On the contrary, we gained acquisitions from that side; many members came over to us who had the highest offices in the state, and who were spoken of as moralists."

" But

“ But amongst so great a multitude of members, might there not have been some who had considered it more deeply, and discovered that the order was a mere mask for concealing dangerous designs? Must not such a thought occur to those who executed these wicked deeds?”

“ Would not you place confidence in the man who was able to form such effectual plans, and pledged himself for their execution?—Would you not think that he must be wise and discreet?”

“ Every man of consequence had his spies about him, for we contrived that even his foot should be our tools. By such means I was acquainted with all their actions and movements; and as soon as they seemed unfavourable to me, one hint was sufficient to have the victim of my suspicions sent to the grave. I confess, that my once retentive memory cannot now state the number who experienced that fate. If the informations of common spies were insufficient, it was not difficult for one of us to introduce himself as a friend, and thus discover his most secret thoughts; and if this scheme was frustrated, then I had recourse to the power of the State Inquisition, and by that means had him condemned at all events. I sought besides to increase the dissatisfaction to the government which the conspirators had already excited, by every method which offered itself to me, and even considerably to inflame their own secret hatred against them. Nay, I knew how to corrupt the minds of those with revolutionary principles, who had not been of that opinion. This was very easy to do, without their being able to discover my views.

“ The jealousy of the state, which has often deprived the most noble family of an excellent member,

member, made its sacrifice, was always detested by the relations of the deceased; but all were too much accustomed to regard that blood-thirsty hyena, the inquisition, as a necessary evil, or rather they were prevented by terror, from publicly expressing their detestation for such an iniquitous tribunal. Thus the evil was reconciled, and their only consolation was, that others had suffered the same fate, and if they canonized the victim, it was considered as an honourable mark of respect to his ashes, and reckoned a sufficient recompence for their infamous cruelty*. All these wounds I sought to irritate, or to make fresh ones, and I could see with the greatest certainty the good effect of it, as nobody would bear without discontent unmerited affliction. Does not (thought I) even the most insignificant insect stretch forth its jaws to bite him who endeavours to crush it? Thus all feeling will not be entirely extinguished, and of course many will think of revenge.

" It was mine as well as my associates' most serious occupation, to procure sacrifices to this state jealousy, and we naturally selected those whom we in the least suspected. We employed false witnesses; treasonable letters were produced, and sometimes nothing more was wanting to ensure the suspicious person a tomb in the canal Orsono. I could relate to you many histories, to shew how we proceeded, but I think them rather too trifling to detain you by such relations. How often did even the most wretched spy succeed in sacrificing an innocent man, merely to obtain the appointed re-

* See an interesting publication on that subject in *Maior's Description of Venice, 4 vols. Second Edition. Leipzig, 1795.*

ward ! In all these affairs, I was the sole director of the whole, and left the execution of it to those subordinate to me. By that means I had the consolation to see in every department conspirators at the head, who had all possible influence in forwarding our grand aim. How easy is it to irritate a despicable state like that of Venice to the commission of the most horrid murders !

" Every undertaking was successful, and the number of conspirators increased every week. Their desire of revenge was already risen to so high a pitch, that I alone, and that by the most serious admonitions, could prevent the storm from bursting. I told them, that it was not yet the proper time for our purpose ; and did all in my power to persuade them to wait with patience for a short interval, when we should be sure of the most signal success. My arguments, my courage, my resolution and actions soon acquired me, even among the most savage, such unlimited influence, that they gave themselves blindly and with great alacrity to my direction, and without enquiring into many things which appeared paradoxical to them."

" Prince, you seem not surprised that a party of conspirators gave themselves up entirely to my plans, promised to adhere to me by an oath (which in their eyes you will say is not looked upon as any thing), and kept it punctually. Do you not ask how it was possible for me to acquire such a great ascendancy ?

" You must have forgotten yourself when you, a great moralist, a pious, virtuous, and highly esteemed person, who are known to be possessed of so much human knowledge, would have obeyed

obeyed any suggestions, let the execution of them have been ever so capricious or wicked*.

" The putting the mob in motion was left to me; as without their aid the whole fabric must have been demolished.

" Many of the statesmen among the conspirators, as I have observed, had high employments, and I myself was soon elevated to a similar situation. We did every thing in our power to make the poor people think their burdens insupportable. Even if this end were not answered, it produced still another advantage, as they confined to us all the places of dignity, and confirmed our appointments; for you cannot yet have forgotten, that this is the case with all those whom the people hate the most, because the state has the least to fear from them. We became more and more powerful, and I did not suffer the original scheme to be at all violated, but studied how to increase our influence. The oppressions of the state, we contrived, should rapidly increase, as the breaking out of the conspiracy approached. We began to oppose the common attachment to idleness; we declared that begging would be prohibited, and by that means the mob kept to industry and labour; moreover, we determined to abolish the frequent festivals and other diversions.

" The few statesmen who did not belong to the conspiracy, were easily overcome, or deceived by

* The Prince had never the intention to give him any answer to such questions. His countenance shewed distinctly how much he suffered, how much the burden of his crimes oppressed him, and that he now saw clearly the consequences of his guilt, which he heard from the mouth of a seducer. My compassion towards the Prince, which continually agitated my inmost frame, could only be diverted by the strongest detestation for the Armenian, whose face seemed to glow with pleasure at the thought of having seduced an honest man.

*Note of Count O ***
the*

the appearance of this innovation ; and if none of them would suit, there was another method of obtaining our aim which never failed, namely, restoring to the mob their pleasures and their feasts, by our authority ; the advantage we were to derive from that, is very obvious ; for the mob, who think the government good and perfect only when it sanctions their favourite inclinations, must of course be the more enraged, when they find themselves so suddenly deprived of their pleasures, and no beam of hope left that they shall ever return. We then began to shew ourselves from a distance as their saviours, and we could expect them with certainty to join us in large parties. All these things were prepared, and the proclamation was merely delayed, because I thought it at yet not proper.

" I could see plainly, that the conspiracy, though it should break out in its most horrid form, would not satisfy my views, which were extended to the throne of government. I feared internal divisions ; or, that they would not like a sovereign at the head of a republic, the principle of which they had long before imbibed.

" To behold myself as a kind of Doge, which dignity I could have acquired without great difficulty, seemed rather too mean for me, who had ventured so much. I justly conceived, that every one of the noble conspirators would have contended with me for equal rights, although till that period they strictly obeyed my commands. I at least had reason to expect this from their interest and vanity, as soon as they saw that their purpose was accomplished, and that I was of no more use to them. The power of a foreign court only could support me, which I hoped, from a variety of circumstances,

ses, easily to obtain ; yet there was some difficulties in my way ; for my personal appearance at different places would have been of the greatest assistance in my designs, but it was necessary for me to continue at Venice.

" I had many concerns of my own which I could not trust to another ; and besides, I was at the same time Inquisitor of the State.

" Before I had resolved how to proceed, I received a letter which at once removed all embarrassment. It was from Charles. I commanded him to stay at **d**, and give me an account of all circumstances which took place there. Till now I had heard nothing of him ; I began therefore, to consider him as lost, when I received a letter in hieroglyphics to the following purport*.

d the 13th, 17**.

" As I dare say you are surprized at having heard nothing from me for so long a time, I must tell you the reason. Trifling affairs I thought not worth while to communicate to you, and business of importance I did not think proper to trust to the post. I know, that at Venice they have eyes like Argus, and an hieroglyphical letter might excite suspicion. On the supposition that you would be angry with me for not using other means to give you information, I entreat you to read this letter, and your anger, I hope, will soon change into joy and satisfaction ; for my self, I am so proud of what I have done, that I look forward with confidence for your commendation. That it might in

* This letter I found among the papers of the Armenian. All his writings were in my possession.

some great measure be obtained, I thought proper not to acquaint you earlier with my undertakings, till I could be perfectly sure of their entire success, and on that account you will excuse my delay.

" Now to the business.

" I informed you in my last letter, that both the private ministers L... and D... had been dispatched in their prison. Rejoice with me that this is false. These warm friends have been preserved, though their death was asserted so confidently that I myself was deceived. At that time, one did not know how to proceed, nor whom to believe. Only a very few who had been in the confidence, and always about . . d . . could know the proceedings with certainty, and on that account, I do not wonder that my endeavours to obtain some news from my associates were fruitless."

" The Count P... is now arrived. You are a great favourite of his; and if you were not the man, I should wonder, for he speaks of you with enthusiasm; and this is not his common method. You have studied his weak side so accurately, that he is involved in perpetual conjectures. He believes that you have the power of working miracles; and I cannot at all comprehend this peculiar phenomenon, which is such a direct contrast with his usual mode of thinking."

" The greatest physiologists could not learn very much of us, for were they to examine us closely, they perhaps might entirely lose themselves in the labyrinth of hypothesis.

" This Count P... I became acquainted with in one of our lodges. As my character at present is in high estimation, I easily obtained admittance into his private societies, and I soon succeeded in ingratiating

ingratiating myself into his favour, when he heard that I knew you personally.

" I learned from him, that both the Secretaries L... and D... were still alive, but in close prison; and as they would not confess any thing in spite of all the rigorous means which had been employed, the ... d... had not yet passed his sentence upon them. Before I had heard the truth of their fate, I formed the resolution to save these persons at all hazards, and in that I have succeeded so excellently, that you will exult in your worthy scholar.

" My first business was to prepare for the jailor a dose which sent him to his long home. By means of the Count P... I procured another person in his place, who was one of my associates, and a cunning fellow. By his means, all the locks, bolts, &c. were so prepared, that they could be opened with little trouble, and your newly-invented aqua fortis I used in this instance with incredible effect. A dark night was chosen for the purpose of setting both at liberty, in order to prevent their searching after them, and to exalt your power in the eyes of Count P...

" I threw into the prison the following note:

" You have experienced my power, and yet
" you dared to confine my favourites in dismal
" prisons. Could you suppose, that it would be
" impossible for me to break open locks and
" bolts? Do not inquire further after them, else
" shall my powerful arm execute the punishment
" which compassion and weakness still withhold."

" BARON VATIFIELLO.*"

* The reader will recollect that the Armenian was known in .. d... under this name.

" The

" The effect which this produced was so great, that it was prohibited on pain of the most severe punishment to speak a word of these circumstances, particularly as they found the jailor shot, which business I contrived, but in such a manner, that it appeared as though he had committed this action himself."

" I pitied the poor fellow, for I could have made further use of him; but, I feared that he might not be cautious enough; and besides that, I had promised him a recompence, which I could never bestow. Besides, it was calculated to produce a deep impression, as it appeared that this man had killed himself through mistake. The most certain way is always to be preferred; you have frequently told me so yourself; and if I had considered this sooner, I should not have made such an ample excuse, thereby exhibiting a kind of weakness, as if I ought to hesitate before I sacrificed a man for either your interest or my own. I am heartily ashamed of that, and now give you the greatest assurance of improvement, that I may obtain your pardon.

" As soon as I had my prisoners in safety, they fell before me upon their knees; for till then, it seemed to me as if veneration and terror had confined their tongues. They thought me an ambassador from you, and I suffered them to continue in that opinion. They then confessed to me, that they had confidently reckoned upon your delivering them. These men are entirely at your service, for they have promised me to perform any thing that you command them to do.

" One I have sent to . . . , and the other to . . . , after having given them instructions. I hope this will be agreeable to you; and so much the more,

as D... sent me a letter to-day, a copy of which I will communicate to you.

" That Count P... is the favourite of ... d...
" I have already told you. I only add, that he
" has made himself so necessary to him, that no-
" thing can be undertaken without him.

" CHARLES."

P. S.—I have just received a letter from L.. saying that he already begins to act a greater character at ... All goes on agreeably to our wishes, and as soon as I hear any thing of consequence from him, I will communicate it to you. I believe he may do you many great services there. The bearer of this you may entirely confide in.

COPY

COPY OF THE INCLOSED LETTER.

The President . . . to Charles . . .

. . . the . . . 17 . . .

" My joy and haste oblige me to tell you that in a few words with which I could fill many sheets.—But with what shall I begin first? I find that this task is more difficult than I imagined.

" I have been wonderfully successful in all my undertakings. By your management, I am at present so disguised, that my fear of being discovered is now converted into boldness, and nobody has any idea who I am—I think that this may principally be attributed to the Baron Vatifiello. If this immortal being would once vouchsafe to make me so happy as to employ me as an instrument in his wonderful deeds! Yet I perhaps wish too much.

" You know I have assumed the name of . . ., and am already risen to the rank of President. The . . . has given me his favour in the highest degree. I should be vain enough to imagine, that this, or at least a part of it, might be ascribed to my personal abilities, were it not, that when I seriously consider, I think that I must attribute all to the Baron

Baron and the Order of . . . , into which your goodness has introduced me as a member.

" Before I conclude, I must give you a proof how well I am beloved by His nephew will soon be at Venice, and will stay there for some time incog: this he has told me in confidence. You will perhaps say in reply, that this is not of sufficient consequence to cause much exultation; but I would observe, that it may become so, for . . . keeps it as a secret from *every other person* without exception, and without pretending to have any other intentions than those which are laudable. I made myself dear to the sovereign by degrees, and have been obliged to write in his name several letters to the young Prince.

" I must expedite the bearer of this, who goes on business for my master, and without making his appearance, he will send this letter to you by a third person: I hope I shall soon be able to write you more fully. I conclude with thanks for your kindness; I do this in few words, because my heart is not able by any language to express its gratitude. You may rely upon my fulfilling all your commands in the most punctual manner. I look with anxiety for your satisfaction, which will increase my happiness in the highest degree. In the mean time

I remain,

Your

DEBTOR"

P. S.—I was obliged to open this letter again. It was forgotten by an unpardonable negligence of the messenger, who had for a long time carried

at about in his portmanteau. When I was informed of this, I could account for your long and till then inexplicable silence. At this time I have ready a parcel of letters for you, which will inform you what this letter can but tell you in a small degree. All is going on according to your own wishes. As soon as you inform me where I may send the parcel of letters to, you shall receive them without delay. The sincerity which you will find in them, must convince you how much I am disposed towards him to whom I owe every thing.

" The Prince of . . . has been some time at Venice; this information may be of the greatest consequence. All is tolerably quiet here, because the . . . has been very much attacked by his usual disorder."

" the account that you were here, as well as the rest of the information, gave me great pleasure, for nothing ever occurred but what I overcame without any difficulty. You was from that moment the principal object of my attention, and that I should make you subservient to my purpose, I deemed certain before I could possibly know your character. The idea may seem absurd, but I could not bring myself to think otherwise. My conjecture became so much the more strengthened, when I beheld you, and observed in your countenance a pleasing melancholy, which promised me the best effect, although your other qualities seemed in some measure to be in opposition to your appearance.

" To make you entirely dependent upon me, was my first resolution, being the ground work of my plan. I was desirous that they should choose you King of . . . This seemed to me certain, because

because I learned during my stay in . . . , that there were many dissatisfied and rebellious persons in the nation, anxious to obtain a Regent from the house of . . . , who would restore them all their ancient privileges.

" Prince, I feel how difficult it is to make a plan of mine appear to another person clear and intelligible; let it suffice that I executed them with effect, and triumphed over seeming impossibilities. The success of all my schemes, till the period when they arrested me, and when I, as the master spring, was made inactive, vouch for the truth of my assertions*.

" Now Prince, recollect the period when I made myself first known to you, from which time I intend to trace your history minutely†.

" It was upon the terrace of Saint Mark where I followed you in the mask of the Armenian, and announced to you the death of one of your relations. I believed it to be the best method to act mysteriously, justly conceiving, that under such circumstances you would retain a greater veneration for me, and be very desirous to procure a more intimate acquaintance with me."

" In this," replied the Prince with sorrow, " you did but too well succeed, for I had scarcely any desire but that of speaking to you. How could it be otherwise, since your account agreed so perfectly with the truth! That you knew my real name, I now no longer wonder; but that you

* I omit what he has related here. The reader knows it already, from the intercepted hieroglyphical letters by Lord Seymour. The Armenian did not then know that their contents were already made public.

† I must beg of the reader to recollect all that happened to the Prince, as related in the foregoing Volumes.

could announce the death of the hereditary prince, and the hour in which he expired, is still an enigma to me, at least I wish to have it unravelled, that I may no longer judge erroneously."

" I have already told you," said the Armenian, " that D. . . . was then in . . . , under the name of . . . , President, and was in complete possession of the favour of the This person was a willing tool in my hands. I sent him some poison, which he was to put in the drink of the hereditary Prince ; and I was so well acquainted with its slow effect, that I could calculate the hour of his death very minutely.

" Finding that you lived very retired, it was necessary for me (in order to afford my spies an easy access to you) to involve you in the intoxicating pleasures of dissipation, for every thing that tended to promote serious consideration was disadvantageous to me ; with this view I discovered your rank, and the natural consequence was, that the ambassadors of the Senate received you with all possible respect* ; you found that it was agreeable to what I previously informed you. This was done to give you a fresh proof how materially I was acquainted with all that concerned you, and to prevent any embarrassment in the assembly to which they conducted you, I was present as a nobleman, and observed with pleasure how deep the impression which I had made was engraven upon your mind.

" To surprize you with something wonderful, and to strengthen the idea that I every where followed you invisibly, I went the next evening (for the purpose of observing you) to the Terrace of Saint Mark in an unknown mask. I was not long

* See Vol. I. p. II.

there when you appeared with Count O., and was compelled by a shower of rain to enter a coffee-house.

" The circumstance which happened there you cannot forget*. It made part of the plan I was pursuing. The hall in which you were brought upon my command, was the rendezvous of the conspirators, and the beheading of the Venetian, who belonged to our party, merely a piece of deception with a large puppet, by which means I recommended to you caution during your continuance at Venice. Knowing as you do, that what I have explained actually happened, it will not appear singular to you, that I delivered your watch (as a sign that you might perhaps not come home so soon as usual) to one of your attendants. I took it from your pocket in the tumult.†

" And what was your intention by that? Perhaps nothing more than to raise yourself in my estimation?"

" Partly so; for by that I prevented their enquiring after you, and it convinced them that you were not, as some had supposed in the hands of the State Inquisition, the discovery of which might have had bad consequences.

" I knew perfectly well that you were not very desirous to remain longer at Venice, in spite of what had happened to you; and on that account I contrived with the President ... that you should receive a letter, in which your court suggested that they would be well pleased with your continuing at Venice.‡

" Hence it was that you were enabled by large remittances to make that splendid figure in the cir-

* See Vol. I. p. 13.

† See Vol. I. p. 20.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 21.

cles of gaiety which your situation required; and without this I was confident you would not have continued so long there.

" It was pursuant to my commands that the physician proposed a journey for pleasure upon the Brenta, after you were recovered from a fever; and all that happened to you there was previously ordered by me, and was executed by a cunning fellow, whom you suspected to be a Sicilian. He has given you an exact explanation of most parts; and I will only inform you of that in which he dealt falsely with you, according to the character he was obliged to display.

" The scene which took place with the children*, I designed should not only please your fancy, but elevate your ideas beyond the sphere to which they were at that moment confined.

" Then I was not mistaken when I thought the Sicilian was concerned with you?"

" Certainly not. I now reflected what other means I should use to accomplish my plans; and wisely considered, that the sooner I began the better.

" In what manner the first appearance of the ghost was contrived you know already, and it could not have been difficult for you to have discovered it yourself, because I meant it merely as an introduction, and for that purpose I chose the Sicilian to act the part, who without doing me any mischief, could easily come forward as a deceiver, and whom I designed to assist me in the subsequent performances.

" And you would have obtained your object, if the Sicilian had not related so much to me, which inevitably weakened the impression, if it did not extinguish it entirely."

" I know it, and he has suffered very severely for it. On that account many schemes to support my plan became requisite, which would not have been necessary, if a mistrust had not been excited against me."

" But the second apparition," replied the nobleman, who was always present " you have not yet explained to us."

" It was a very cunning person whom I had instructed in the business, and who had shrouded himself, in case of violence, with a strong suit of armour. As I had your snuff box many times in my hands, I examined the portrait upon it very minutely, and knew that it was a copy of your deceased friend ; thus I was able to give the ghost a strong likeness by means of a wax mask which I had manufactured myself. The other circumstances were trifles, as by the smoke of olive wood and spirits of wine I prevented your making any exact observations."

" But where did this man enter so suddenly ?" I asked him.

" Do you remember, that a cloud of smoke filled the whole apartment ? It came from an opening in the boards ; and these means were employed to obscure the figure as it ascended through the trap-door, which closed itself by a spring."

" And the appearance of the constables ?"

" Was contrived by me, that you might not suspect that I was concerned with the Sicilian."

" The ball rolled slowly upon the altar," said I, interrupting the Armenian. " How was that ?"

" I had loaded the pistols with powder only, and the Sicilian himself rolled the ball upon the altar."

" Oh God ! " exclaimed the Prince, and tears stood

stood in his eyes, “ Was I then so near discovering the trick, and yet—”

“ You ought to admire me so much the more,” said the Armenian, bursting out into a violent fit of laughter. “ Is it not true, Prince, my invention rises far above my conception? It must be done by art, if you mean to catch a person after he has perceived the net.”

“ The remainder,” added Count O... “ which the Armenian explained of that apparition, was nothing more than what the reader already knows from the Prince’s conjecture*; and the more this was unravelled, the more his sorrow increased, so that we scarcely were able to comfort him.

“ You ordered the Sicilian to be apprehended;” said Lord Seymour, after a pause, turning the conversation upon another object. “ Did you not intend by that to let us have a conversation with him, that it might give us the key to his juggling tricks?

“ Undoubtedly; for as he explained to you the appearances falsely (which lie you might have discovered by a little attention), I thought those which I had to produce myself would be represented to you so much the more plausibly as wonders.”

“ And that was the very point in which you entirely missed your aim,” said the Prince, “ that was exactly the method to open my eyes.”

“ But for how long?—Yes, Prince, I confess, that I did not expect that of you. It was something uncommon, and I was not sufficiently acquainted with you to be aware of this. Besides, the Sicilian went further than my orders extended.

“ I perceive that.—And is it true, then, that the

* See Vol. I. p. 131. et seq.

whole story concerning Lorenzo del M. te was invention*.

" Nothing else, I can assure you."

" It was of no great use to you, for the Sicilian gave a feeble account of the story of the ring †; there the wretched deceiver was too much unmasked."

" And yet this was exactly agreeable to my plan."

" How ?"

" I have told you before, that I did not know you well enough and I believed, that if a deceiver of such a kind, who was in connection with a murderer, impeached the character which I had played, If such an one, I say, should give evidence against me; it must make a stronger impression upon you, as by every inducement he had a tie to the contrary."

" But what could you imagine would follow the letting us know, that he made his escape, as by that our suspicion must have been augmented?"

" That indeed happened without my knowledge; I was under the necessity of being absent for several days ; they did not find out his escape in time, otherwise you would never have heard of it."

" What view had you in causing the second apparition to say, that I should experience it at Rome, and that I ought to look to myself?"

" This was nothing more than an allusion to your future conversation to the Roman Catholic Church, and to try whether you would by such means be persuaded to take a journey to Rome. If I had perceived that you were inclined to go there, I should have employed other means in order to dissuade you from it. From that also I

* See Vol. I. p. 95.

† See Vol. I. p. 119.

could

could conclude, that you thought the second appearance of the ghost to be no deception, and this was a sufficient inducement for me to proceed in my operations.

" I soon discovered you to be a sceptic ; on that account, I was obliged to use other means by which I might obtain my aim ; and although this could not be done suddenly, I thought it would be effected with certainty.

" Through the contrivance of a certain priest, your servant was drawn into my net, and I commanded that he should even be surprized and taken up."

" And this also happened through you ? Oh God !—And what views had you in doing that ?"

Many : but those which concerned you were not answered—(only in a subsequent period he became useful to me ; but till I describe that time, I will delay mentioning him)—I succeeded by his loss in bringing one of my most skilful creatures into your service—the cunning Biondello. All that they told you of him, when you engaged him, was done merely to induce you to take him without hesitation. That it was to obtain your favour, the consequences of this event have shewn. As they had told you so many fine stories of his disinterested character and fidelity*, and that by the multitude of his associates (whom he could make use of every moment,) he must become necessary for you, it was not to be wondered at that you made unconditional use of him, and placed in him the greatest confidence. From him I became ac-

* See Vol. I.

quainted with every little project of yours, and when you thought I had no concern in your undertakings, they were solely under my direction.

" Without even my expecting it, there arose another advantage, when you conceived the idea of explaining in a natural manner that which you believed at first to be a wonder, namely, the idea that the whole system of religion, which you had imbibed in your infancy, might be founded on erroneous principles. I heard with great pleasure from Biondello, that you already began to doubt its purity, which seemed to you till then too holy to admit of an attack. Whatever Biondello said against the proposition, I could so clearly see the beneficial consequences which would arise from it, that I employed every method to detach you from your religion, and if possible, to make it detestable to you, and to convert you into a free-thinker. It was then that I hoped to find you a perfect victim to my authority. It was by my contrivance that your imaginary friends put into your hands all those books which seconded my intention, and that you were afterwards introduced into the Bucentauro. And to prevent your again enjoying that tranquillity of mind which was so much distinguished in you, and which upon reflection might have returned, they sought in every possible manner to lead you into dissipation. They solicited your friendship, they seduced you, they led you into the most agreeable companies, and endeavoured by every method to make your new manner of life as agreeable as possible.

" Do not think, Prince, that this was merely accident, although it might appear so to you. So humiliated as you now are, it can have no other than

than good consequences upon your christian heart, particularly if you exercise this beloved virtue.— On that account I once more remind you, that notwithstanding your superior qualities, of which you boasted so highly, you would not have become the idol of every society you went into, if it had not been partly because you were a prince (a title which hides what would much disfigure others,) and principally because I designed it to be so.— Know, Prince, for the many pleasant hours which you have passed in this manner, you still owe me your thanks.

“ Now I endeavoured to get rid of you Count O . . . It was effected by a letter to one of my brethren at the court of your sovereign ; and your presence there, you know yourself, became so necessary, that you dared not stay longer here, tho’ you were very much inclined to it.”

“ But I am suprized,” replied I, “ that you did not take a shorter step : you might have assassinated me by one of your banditti.”

“ Do not think so highly of yourself, my dear Count !—You were too despicable for me to have you murdered ; and besides, it might have become too evident to the Prince, and perhaps (for what will not such trifles sometimes produce ?) might have caused him to alter his opinion.”

“ If I was so despicable to you, whence was it that you feared my presence ?”

“ I feared your presence !—We often avoid a little stone that lies in our road, or rather, we push it away with the foot, to walk more commodiously, not because we fear to break our neck or leg by its being in the way. The hindrances which you could throw in my way, in respect to the Prince, were so trifling, so— But why do I defend

I defend myself.—The wise man very often suffers himself to be stung by a fly, when he has it in his power to chase it away. Yet I must be a little gallant to you, and for that reason I willingly will confess to you, that in comparison with the other cavaliers of the Prince's household, I had more to fear from you than those buzzing insects of the day. You see, Count, that I speak plainly to you."

" Now I will return to you, my most gracious exalted master!

" Till this period you had not made an appearance, which would in the end cause your circumstances to be embarrassed, and for which I wished so heartily.. I saw beforehand, that this could happen in no other manner than by introducing you to a person with whom you would be obliged to draw a parallel, and by that means aid the accomplishment of my wishes.. No one was better calculated for that purpose than the Prince of **d**, and I could easily induce him to come hither by the assistance of the Order ** and the Count P***, who was much esteemed at that court. That his presence had the desired effect upon your conduct, you know without having it again repeated."

" That you should so soon fall into the hands of usurers, was natural; but anxious to prevent this taking place immediately, I contrived to throw a stranger in your way, and so make you dependent upon him. This was (till then unknown to you) the Marquis Civitella.

" How!" exclaimed the Prince, " did I not save him from the hands of the banditti? and—"

" It was done by my express orders, Prince," interrupted the Armenian hastily. " Recollect

the

the evening when you were carried home from the Bucentauro in a chair. Biondello had purposely fixed upon that which he knew would soon break—and he conducted you wrong, in order to guide you unperceived to the spot where Civitella and his banditti waited for you. As soon as they heard your arrival, they began to make a noise, and I knew that you would be led to the spot by your courage, and assist the person attacked. As soon as this happened, the banditti fled, they were employed by us for that purpose, and you imagined you had rescued the Marquis."

" But his wounds," said the Prince, " were visible, and I myself was covered with blood."

" He had no wounds at all. At the dawn of morning, when the lamps were nearly extinguished, and in such a situation, it was very easy for him to deceive you by sprinkling blood upon your cloaths. Consider also, that it was Biondello himself, who for appearance sake, dressed his wounds. Nobody from you even came to examine him."

" But why did you use such means to introduce to me the Marquis, as it would in any other manner have succeeded equally as well?"

" Because I wished to have him closely connected with you, which could not otherwise be done so well; for amongst the many with whom you were surrounded, you paid little attention to individuals; and besides, it would have displeased you if he had offered to lend you such large sums of money, had you not supposed that it was gratitude which induced him to do it. You was not aware, that your own egotism attached you to the Marquis, and he, on that account, conducted you every where, and his extraordinary finesse persuaded you to many things which were agreeable

to my intentions, and to the character which he was engaged to play. Biondello was no less expert at his employment; and he chose his apartment near the side of your sleeping-room. Now, therefore, consider whether it was wonderful that the least movement which you made was communicated to me, as you were always surrounded by two of my tools, in whom you placed an unlimited confidence. The other spies, who still served me, and who were found in every society in which you entered, I will not mention. I only remind you of these circumstances, that you may not be surprised when you find that the line of conduct which you thought an act of your own, was directed solely by my will."

" What I had foreseen and expected now happened. You were entirely without money. Your letters of credit were kept back by my contrivance; and, to make your embarrassment still more pressing, I contrived that you should borrow of an usurer. The whirlpools of dissipation and shew, which the stay of the Prince . d. . had caused, had already so engulphed you, that you could not be sufficiently master of your vanity to renounce it, otherwise than by leaving the place, which you knew would be suspicious. This however was necessary, if you would escape the abyss which was yawning to receive you, and which was enlarged to an alarming extent. You was accustomed to such a prospect. Fearing that all my former labours should prove fruitless, I was obliged to devise a scheme which would not only induce you to continue here, and gratify you in the mean time in the most agreeable manner, but which I could also employ in the execution of my plans.

" To

" To answer this purpose, nothing appeared to me so proper as love—and this so much the more, because I knew perfectly well that this passion had never been roused within you, and must naturally burst forth the stronger. That I might proceed in the safest way, and not present to you many ladies without effect, I was disposed previously to try your taste. From several of the finest originals I had accurate copies taken, and commissioned a painter of Florence to offer them to you for sale. You know how soon you decided for the Madona, and it was on that account unnecessary to make further trials with the other pieces. As I was confirmed by innumerable instances in the opinion, that fancy works the more powerfully if the object is taken from it, where-with it was copied, I contrived it so that you should not be able to buy the picture; for the painter knew beforehand, that it must not be left with you for the highest price, because it was already my own property; and, in order to destroy your hopes of obtaining it, it was told you, that a purchaser had already been found for it.

" The copy had so powerfully been wrought upon your mind, that we naturally expected that you would be much impressed by the original, if we could exhibit her to you with a proper combination of circumstances which really happened afterwards."

" How!" exclaimed the Prince, " was this also your contrivance?—That love, which nothing else—"

" Do not put yourself out of temper, all shall be immediately explained to you.—Do you not remember that Civitella guided all your steps, and made you enter the church, where you found your beloved

beloved goddess, who already waited with impatience your arrival? Was any thing more wanting than to leave to her the part she was instructed to play, after you were already so much occupied with her picture?

" And to be certain that she had made the wished impression upon you, Civitella was obliged, in the concert he gave to you, to introduce the handsome lady who sung, conceiving that a melodious air sung by an enchanting voice, makes a sudden and sometimes deep impression. You were the only one in the whole company, who remained immovable and regardless. This gave us a sufficient ground to presume, that the impression you received had not yet been effaced. In order, therefore, to make it deeper and more permanent, Biondello was to give you only a distant hint that she might be found again, and on that account you did not see her on the wished Sunday evening in church.

" Civitella at that period led you to the gaming-table, to plunge you still deeper in debt; and it must be ascribed to some other cause than your absence of mind, that you lost such large sums:

" This was the time to prejudice you against your court. D . . . was long before convinced of your bad conduct by several accounts which the President . . . gave of you; it therefore only remained to inspire you with hatred against it. The first attempt at this was by Biondello, who told you, that they employed spies to watch you. Your bad conscience (let me for once use this expression) suggested immediately that this could come from no other place than from . . . There was nothing more wanting than to confirm this proposed opinion within you, and Biondello (if it were possible) gained by that means upon your confidence. He
was

was also instructed in giving you a hint, to whom you might attribute it, if the letters should not arrive, which really happened, because I intercepted the correspondence."

" On that account," replied the Prince, " I advised Biondello not to imprison those negotiators."

" Oh ! I now perceive more and more clearly, how shamefully I was deceived by those to whom I gave my confidence, which I had withdrawn from my truly worthy friends !"

The Armenian here darted upon the Prince such a spiteful and contemptuous look, that he turned his eyes from him, and suppressed the tears which flowed down his cheeks. Yet the Armenian did not vent any invectives, to my great satisfaction, but left that part of the subject, and continued.

" You begin to pity me, my gracious Prince. I determined to give you back your Greek Lady, fearful that the letter, which I had prepared for you by the President . . . of your court, might attack you too severely, and then you would have a consolation left; and partly that you should not form a determination to leave Venice. What I suspected happened. As a fortunate lover, and under the idea of obtaining from your sister the accustomed supplies, you answered in an angry style, and the true enmity was vented; especially as you received a fresh letter, in which they laid much guilt to your charge, of which you were totally ignorant at that time."

" And how was it possible that the . . . could believe such things of me ?"

" That was managed by the President, who, in hopes of becoming a great man through me, adopted, out of gratitude, every method to fulfil my

my wishes. And this was very easy for him to do—I took care of the letters which he obtained; and those which I contrived to get signed by your bosom friend Baron F . . . (as they would believe him, he always taking your part with great warmth) produced the greatest effect."

" Oh God!" exclaimed the Prince, " had I but then only defended myself in a letter!"

" And you believe, then, that a letter written in such a stile as that was, would have been sent away from hence? Before I had perused all your letters, no one could be sent away, and those that arrived I always saw, previous to their being delivered to you. In every case, I could without difficulty forge one, as I knew so well how to imitate all hand-writings, and you were always deceived; and if you sent one of your people as messenger with a letter, there were many means to shorten his journey.

" Your sister had by an accident learnt from . . . all that was written to him, and I laboured to make you also quarrel with her, which happened of itself to my great satisfaction. Now you had no affectionate tie that could bind you to your relations, and your situation was precisely what I wished it.

" In order to drive your despair to the highest pitch, and then to shew myself as your saviour, I was obliged to deprive you of all that which you of all that which you could now rely upon, your beloved lady and the Marquis.

" That you might have a high idea of me, and to prepare for what would follow, I contrived that apparition. The facility with which you then ascribed it to natural circumstances, made me with reason conclude how necessary it was that the impression

pression of the following must become so much the stronger in proportion as you sought to enfeeble it by an explanation of the former.

" I should myself think it almost superfluous to explain to you the apparition, did I not expect to have the pleasure of witnessing and enjoying your mortification, that you could not once comprehend it, although blest with such deep discernment, or see through the simplicity of such an experiment.

" Listen then attentively. Biondello, so heartily beloved by you, to whom all your former friends gave way, performed this. That you might not suspect him, and to gain time for the preparations, he pretended to be indisposed. The book which they placed in your hands, kept you, according to my expectation, longer awake than was customary, so that you should not think what appeared was the effect of a dream. The candles were provided with a kind of caps, that scarcely reached to half of the light, which would necessarily be extinguished after a short interval. Biondello, without your knowledge, brought back two others. The violent shock which the thunder made, caused the doors and windows, which were not quite shut, to fly open. The words that you heard were spoken by Biondello through a trumpet, the opening of which was hidden behind your writing-desk.

" And now recall to your mind that evening which you spent in Saint Benedetto, so merrily at the beginning of the ball, and the frightful scene which afterwards caused you so much uneasiness. It will not, I know, be very surprising to you, if I say, that all you met there was my contrivance. You turned yourself in the dance round your neighbour, which was myself. Suddenly, and in such a way that nobody could observe it, I put a

little

A little hook in your dress, and a great part of it was torn. You were obliged to leave the ball, and Biondello conducted you to a room, in which the Marquis had been long waiting for your appearance."

" Terrible!—And who was that lady near his side upon the sofa?—I almost believe still that it was Theresa, for—"

" It was not Theresa, but a prostitute that we had engaged for the purpose."

" And the similarity?"

" Was a deception by a mask and drêss."

" Oh! Why did I not inquire into—your infernal deceit:—I could have so easily discovered it, and then I should have been saved!"

" Not at all. Only a delay of a few days was all that you could gain by it, and you would have fallen again into another trap.—But I knew how to estimate the degree of your passion, which would arise at such a sight, with sufficient correctness to judge before-hand what would be your conduct in such a situation. I was certain, that nothing would prevent you from hastening towards the Marquis with the dagger which lay upon the table, and thus was I enabled even the preceding night, to give you a warning concerning the murder, without your being able to hinder my premeditated intentions. And supposing I should have been mistaken, if by chance you had remembered those words, and had been collected, what should I have lost by it? In that case it was not your beloved, and therefore you would have been satisfied, and the warning would have been a weight upon you, and Biondello would have made you attentive to it, because you had found yourself in a situation in which a murder is not a strange phænomenon."

" But

" But how could you induce your creatures to undertake a thing at such great peril? How, if I had murdered the Marquis?"

" Care was taken to prevent that. The dagger which Biondello laid upon the table when he went behind you into the room, was the only instrument at hand with which you could have injured him. At the point a little button was fixed, and when you was stabbing the Marquis, the blade returned into its handle, and only came out again when you let it loose; thus by the most violent blow it could not wound, although it deceived the mind. And is it not true that Civitella performed his character in a masterly manner?"

" The blood which came from his supposed wound issued from a bladder filled with a red liquid which he had hidden in his bosom; and you, oh, great hero, were frightened so much by it, that though but a moment before you were all rage and revenge, you were persuaded by Biondello to run off with him, to which suggestion you yielded without the smallest resistance.

" He accordingly conducted you first to the Convent of Franciscans, and increased your fears by his descriptions of the pursuits of the banditti, in order that he might convey you from that place to the Convent . . . , in which there had been previously made the necessary preparations. There you found your beloved."

" Then it was herself?"

" She herself."

" And how can this be possible?—I saw her die, and F . . . saw her dissected, and you restored her to me afterwards alive again!—Since I was induced to believe in your power of miracles, I see it in many contradictions."

" You

" You became yourself the cause of the contradiction. You were an eye-witness of all, and yet you will not trust your own experience !—Yes, it was your beloved, whom you saw ill and dying, yet this was nothing but deception."

" Is it possible !—That a deception."

" Deception."

" And I saw her pale lips, her fallen cheeks, her languid eyes.—No, that must be real."

" Prince, when shall I make you understand ?—Hark, how my chains rattle !—How could I raise her again, if her death had not been a deception ? or if I were able to do so, should I sit here ? At any other time such an error would have given me pleasure ; but now it is my intention to destroy every blossom, which at a future period might give you happiness even at the hazard of my own destruction. No, Prince, reconcile yourself to the fact, that the goddess whom you passionately adored, was assisting to deceive you ; and never, even in your dreams, must she hereafter appear to you, otherwise than a detestable being, that like a beautiful serpent would sting the person who caressed it. She *never* loved you. Or do you think still that it was another person, who really was ill and then died, and had only borrowed the likeness of your beloved ? If you think it is a fact, I would have you consider, that no person in the last hours of his life ever had such presence of mind as to be able to play so visibly the character of another person ; and if it should have been so, what profit could have ensued from it, when she had only applied the fatal hour of dissolution to aid a deception ? Was not even the conversation, which you had with her, of such a nature that it was almost impossible to mistake another person for her ?"

" Yes,

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" Yes,

" Yes, it is but too true.—But why do you not unravel my doubts rather than augment them?"

" Ha!—Could I but augment them—Her haggard cheeks, her pale lips, her hollow eyes, were nothing but—very strong painting, her feebleness nothing but disguise.—Do you not remember, that she pretended the light was insupportable to her, and that she sought to keep it always at a distance? How easy it was then to deceive you, especially as you were not a cool spectator, but felt every pain which the sick person suffered. Consider moreover the situation of your mind when you came to the convent."

" Is it so, Prince? Oh that your feelings may not already be so blunted as to resist this attack! Oh that I were able to give a thousand-fold pangs that could pierce you to the very heart. Her death was nothing but an artificial swoon, at the beginning of which they contrived to have you absent, that you might not discover the truth."

" But the dissection?"

" Took place on another person, whom I had, merely for that purpose, suffered to be poisoned. And to deceive your Baron F . . . , a mask of wax would have been sufficient, but her face remained covered for the greatest part of the dissection,

" Now I thought it time to introduce you again to public notice, to shew myself to you as your friend. That could not happen in a common manner; on that account the apparition* appeared to you, which was easily effected, because in your absence every thing had been prepared for it. The top of your bed was fastened to the ceiling, and this could be moved at pleasure. The

* See the foregoing volume.

Genius which presented himself before you was the image of a picture, which a magic-lantern threw upon the furniture of your bed, which was also prepared for that purpose."

" He seemed to lean down upon me."

" It seemed to be so, because it shewed itself first in miniature, and then by a combination of mirrors, convex glasses, and other optical instruments, it became larger and larger. The words which you heard were spoken by a child (who had learnt them by heart) through a tube, which terminated in one of the bed-posts, and I myself let fall a letter through an opening over you."

" And the music?—I never before heard any thing similar: it was divine, and the harmony so charming, that I could not compare it with sounds produced from an instrument."

" They were cylindrical glasses, which were turned between wetted leathers,* and they were accompanied by a little organ with silver pipes, and a lute. The object of that was, in case you was asleep, to wake you, and to prepare you for the ensuing scene."

" And why was I not to open the letter before day-break?"

" I was willing to try the strength of the belief which you would have in the whole appearance. If you had opened the letter sooner, you would have found nothing in it but blank paper, for the writing in it was written with sympathetic ink, which could only be visible at a certain time, as you will have observed by the direction. I also

* I have wondered very much to find here a kind of harmonica: a proof that the first invention is not so new as is by some persons imagined.

should have punished you for that disobedience by an apparition, which in that case was already prepared.

“ That all in the letter relative to the Marquis was merely a deception, is now comprehensible; for it is easy to imagine, that he could immediately recover, as he was not in reality wounded.—But how could the watchman be deceived? or were they creatures of yours?”

“ No; they were not. Do you think that I should have disclosed such things to them. I appeared to the Marquis in the described form, and the watch by my command had taken a sleeping draught which affected them at the very moment: —that I could do this without those people receiving harm from it, I have already told you.”

“ But did the impression which your apparition made upon the watch, become doubly strong when they awoke, and could see all that happened?”

“ I shall prove the contrary, because their fancy presented to them more than they could in reality have observed.

“ But might not one of them have had the thought to inquire into the business?”

“ If so, nothing would have been lost. When you had formed the resolution to leave the convent, and had given your command to Biondello, from which I concluded, that you still doubted the truth of the matter, I commanded that those words “conquer your disbelief,” should be once more repeated to you, in order to confirm the idea that you were always surrounded by invisible powers, that attended to your words and actions.

“ Of the conduct which Civitella manifested towards you, I say nothing. You know the issue of it, that in spite of the preceding event which happened,

happened, he obtained the former place of friendship in your heart."

" I must interrupt you here. I recollect a circumstance which you have not explained to me. Who was it that told me in the note, that I should go to a certain place, where I was attacked, but defended and rescued by the courage of a friend, who became afterwards my chamberlain. Yet I will not inquire further into the business: it was probably one of your plans."

" No, it was not: but both Biondello and myself sought to make it subservient to our wishes, and by bringing it forward as a scheme of your court to make you more inveterate against it. It happened during my absence, and I could not discover who had assisted me in so favourable a manner. You see that I am sincere.*

" That the multitude of unpleasant incidents, united with the apparitions, must have made a strong impression upon your mind was very natural, but that it should induce you to harbour a disgust for the world, was not what I expected, according to your former manner of thinking. I supposed that you would sing penitential psalms, to bewail your former disbelief, and be thankful for the lash of correction, which had brought you to the right path. I was much mistaken, for you were occupied with nothing else than the idea of lost happiness. This induced you to think of committing suicide, as was proved by your soliloquies, which Biondello overheard through a crevice in your chamber-door, for no word could escape us."

" You have then been in my palace?"

* See the foregoing volume. This was the contrivance of Lord Seymour, when Johnson saved him, and to enter as chamberlain into the Prince's service.

" Very often."

" And did I never see you?"

" You did not know me. The old man, who visited Biondello as his cousin, was myself *."

" Wonderful! However, proceed.

" Such ideas, I conceived, ought to be rooted from your mind, and that you should imbibe those which I found would be more necessary. The metamorphosis of the ribband was the beginning *."

" And how did that happen?"

" Nothing was easier. Biondello had a false key to your bureau, and had coloured the ribband beforehand with a sympathetical liquid, which became visible in open air only, and disappeared again in a short space of time; he had observed, that you frequently took it out of the bureau, and this induced him to prepare it in that manner during your absence. The close of the scene was conducted by Biondello and the Marquis*, of which I hope nothing will be incomprehensible to you, as they only played their studied performances, and the ring which confirmed your opinion, I easily procured.

" You will still remember, that Civitella conducted you into many societies merely for the purpose of leading you into dissipation; in consequence of which, all those sentiments were discarded which had been formerly your ambition. From perceiving that you had entirely abandoned them, I could easily draw a conclusion as to the situation of your mind, and that no new doubts might be thrown into your way, I contrived that

* See the foregoing volume.

the Bucentauro should be dispersed, because it would have appeared suspicious if the members of it had suddenly altered their opinions: and this was done in such a manner, that it might not destroy all that I had so carefully constructed; for the character of your disposition was so doubtful, that every object which offered itself could not fail to make a strong impression upon it, and produce great changes, which in a tranquil and reflecting mind would not have been possible.

" That appeared to me the best time to make you a proselyte. We could observe, by every occurrence, how willingly you would submit to an opinion from which you could assure yourself forgiveness of your sins, although the priest often laughs in his sleeve at the idea; and yet does not chuse to expose its falsehood, because he would not injure his trade, which is so lucrative, and so well fitted for him, on account of the clandestine enjoyments which are attached to it. I could not introduce to you for that purpose a common person: it must be one whose fame of sanctity was not merely bombast, the lustre of which disappears in a clear light. I therefore chose the Bishop."

" Was he also in league with you?"

" No; his folly was increased to such a high pitch, that he sacrificed himself for others with the greatest pleasure."

" And you could persuade him to preach that sermon?"

" Does that seem singular to you?—Men, whose heads are full of chimeras, are to be found almost every where; and such are easily to be persuaded to any undertaking, if it has but the least appearance of encouraging their favourite idea. And this was a clear case. I told him with great affliction,

affliction you were a lost sheep from the flock, and tears immediately started from his eyes. I dared do nothing more than make him believe that a sermon might perhaps bring you back. It would have been a great scruple of conscience with him not to comply with my request.

" The Bishop told me afterwards, that you had acquainted him with the incidents of my life, and that you had begged of him to deliver that sermon. Was this also your desire?"

" Undoubtedly, and for that very reason I appeared before him in the same dress in which I had done to you, that you might know my person by the description he gave you. I was aware, that as soon as you learned this came from me, it would make a strong impression upon your mind, and augment my credit with you."

" But what if I had not gone to church?"

" I beg your attention to the issue; that you may learn how it happened. In that case I relied entirely on the Marquis and your own situation. He, whose lips always overflowed with taunts and scoffs against the admirers of religion, was at the same time with you a penitent. It was no wonder then that he should know that you had a desire to visit the church. You seemed unwilling to take that step alone: he offered you his hand, and you were then so much the more ready, because you had known him before to be the greatest free-thinker, and now heard him praise the Bishop; and if, against all our expectation, you should have refused to go, you know me, that I never was at a loss for methods to guide you."

" Did you imagine that I should perhaps encourage the idea, that the Bishop was acquainted with you, when the Marquis persuaded me to go to the church with him?"

" Not

" Not only had I seen this before-hand, but I even reckoned upon it ; and if you had not fallen yourself upon that thought, the Marquis knew how to guide you to it. Have you already forgotten how much I won afterwards upon you, when the death of the Marquis seemed to confirm the truth of what he had told you of me, and—

" And did all that happen by contrivance ? The fever of the Marquis, his violent paroxysm, his death :—Were these mere deception ? "

" Nothing more. As far as I know, the Marquis is yet alive."

" Oh God !—Proceed, that I may empty my cup of confusion to the dregs."

" That you shall, Prince, to the last drop. Do not fear that I leave off in order to deprive myself by so doing of the last happiness which I can be capable of enjoying. That the idea of what the Marquis could tell you from me, might have still greater effect upon you, and in order to leave it to your own imagination, what would you think of my miracles (though his relation alone must have already appeared to you incredible), I interrupted him by my appearance. This procured me in the mean time, the advantage of giving you new proof of my power and omnipresence. I came out from a thin tapestry, and that you might not approach me, and obstruct the second part of the miracle, the Marquis held you fast by your hand, till I had locked the room-door behind me."

" But I followed you immediately, and could not discover you. Where did you hide yourself so suddenly ? "

" I was the same monk who met you upon the stair-case. My dress was so contrived, that I could change it immediately ; and a waxen mask, seve-

ral

ral of which I carried with me, rendered it impossible that you should know me by my face. The Cardinal, who was present during my metamorphosis, was in the plot, and came on that account down the stair-case to shew you that I could have no where escaped without being observed, and therefore must necessarily have disappeared. You evinced by your conduct, that you wished to know me more distinctly. And I thought that the best opportunity to tell you by a speaking trumpet, which was applied as before, that your obedience only would make you worthy of that knowledge: and to my satisfaction your countenance shewed that I might expect it from you.*

" I thought it proper for me to shew myself once more as your saviour, before I came forward with my demands. On that account I set all your creditors upon you, in order to put you in the greatest trouble, for I well knew that you had nobody at that time who would interest himself for you, and endeavour to appease the noisy claimants. On that account I appeared as a pay-master, commanded to deliver you new sums of money.

" The period when the Bishop could be useful to me was now over, and I found it necessary to put him out of the way, that he might not be hurtful to me. He had made you an admirer of religion. Others were now necessary to occupy his place, that a scheme might be raised upon a new foundation, as it agreed with my previous plans. On that account Sebastiano had sought to acquire the confidence of the Bishop, that he might be able to get yours."

" You have not told me yet who the Bishop was. That he was not the person which the

* See the foregoing volume.

writing that Sebastiano delivered to me after his death, had represented him, I see now but too clearly.

" But very little was known about him, his history remained a profound secret; the only thing discovered was, that Germany was his birth-place, and this merely was betrayed by his great partiality to that nation. You once told the Marquis a family-secret; this and other favourable circumstances induced me to compose that history which Sébastiano delivered to you. The character of the Bishop was too dear to you to entertain any doubt as to its being a genuine story. My object was gained. Your hatred against . . . rose to the highest pitch, when you saw that so many deeds of murder were upon that side. You thought it was . . . who had taken from you your beloved and the Bishop, and even aimed at your own life (as the sudden appearance of your lost servant proved to you) and your confidence increased towards Sébastiano.

" But why did you seek to make the innocent Baron F . . . so suspicious and detestable to me, that I consented to his killing him? Could you not obtain your aim otherwise than by laying this crime upon my soul*?"

* I saw the letters which were fabricated in the name of Baron F . . . and myself, and which were delivered to the Prince to stimulate him to such a deed. Never did I see hand-writings so artfully and accurately imitated. I should have acknowledged all the letters which were forged under my name to have been my own writing, had I not seen the whole of their contents. This may serve as a new request to my readers for their compassion towards the unhappy Prince.

*Note of Count O * **

" F.... was now a hindrance to me. Who could say, that if an opportunity offered, he might not make his friendship again valuable? And would not your new friends stand upon the ruins of your old ones so much the surer? The future party which I premeditated for you would have required many other assassinations; and could I not hope with certainty, that the absolution for your sins (an easy task for a person to perform in the Popish church) must be so much the more desirable to you, the greater burden you had upon your conscience?"

" You have not yet explained to me the event that happened to my servant.—Was he also a creature of yours?"

" No; he was too stupid."

" And yet how does that agree with what you told me? You said, you made him a prisoner, and at the same time a... officer was about to hire him to assassinate me."

" You ought to admire my foresight. I caused your servant to be taken up, in order to extract some information from him; but principally to accommodate you with a new servant. To prevent any suspicion of that proceeding falling upon me, I examined him myself in an A....an uniform. The darkness and my art deceived him, and he very easily mistook me for the colonel, and my companions for officers; besides, we left it to his own choice, to think of us as he pleased. I imprisoned him so long as I wanted him. He was easily induced to believe that no banditti could kill you, and I had entirely accomplished my end with him. Your hatred towards your court, and the confidence

confidence you placed in me, who could warn you of approaching danger, increased very much."

" And you who always panted after blood—I do not comprehend why you did not make use of that opportunity to your profit, but rather prevented me in that letter from taking any revenge."

" It was not yet time. I stopt the current, that it might burst forth with greater violence. And did I not give you by that a new proof of my whole manner of thinking? And could I well miss having disclosed to you afterwards the whole business from a quarter where you even seemed to lend your arm to assist the Deity in punishing the crimes of others?"

Sebastiano, and his brethren of the clergy, had already done so much, that I hoped you would be entirely ready for an apostacy; and if this was not the case, then we were ready to expect, that as I made you so eager to obtain a near acquaintance with me, you would take that step with pleasure, in order to become worthy of me, as you were more firmly convinced that your whole fate depended upon my destination."

" Before you proceed further, I would ask you, if it happened also with your consent, that Biondello advised me to fly, as my creditors talked of arresting me?"

" As certainly as that he dared not undertake any thing against my will."

" And if I had followed his advice?"

" I knew you better, and I only wanted to learn by the contrivance, if you had still a private resource to relieve you from embarrassments, which

which I should have been obliged to prevent, as I intended to save you exclusively. In case you listened to Biondello's advice, I was prepared, so that I had nothing to fear from a flight of that kind."?

*THE COUNT O****

IN CONTINUATION.



Here we were interrupted.

From the beginning of the relation, the Armenian had often made great pauses, and affected to feel so feeble, that he was unable to speak long together. It was very visible, that he sought nothing else by that, than merely to gain time; we were notwithstanding induced to comply with his request, because we wished very much to hear from him the sequel of the history. We endeavoured to gain permission that a physician might visit him, and that he might be lightly fettered, though we perceived

perceived, in spite of all his dissimulation, that this was quite unnecessary; and the rigorous Inquisitors were the more easily persuaded to do it, because they still hoped to discover by that means the names of the other conspirators, as every other method to effect such a confession had failed. This appeared to me the proper place to mention this circumstance, and on that account I said nothing of it before hand.

As those circumstances made it absolutely necessary for us to visit the Armenian in his own room, when we were there one evening, the jailor opened the door, and the physician came in. He came often when we were present, but we did not attend to him; however, his timidity was frequently so visible, that it did not escape us. After some inquiries about his patient, he drew out a phial, and presented it to him. His anxiety was very great, and the significant looks which in the mean time he threw at the Armenian, made us presume, that it contained poison, to liberate him from his deserved punishment, which one of his conspirators had perhaps sent to him. Johnson dashed the glass from his hands, before one of us could take that resolution. The swoon of the bearer convinced us, that we had not deceived ourselves, and the savage countenance of the Armenian, as he gnashed his teeth, shewed that he had well understood the hints of the physician.

The physician recovered very soon, and entreated us, in the most humble manner, not to ruin him, and to keep the matter a secret. We promised it, upon condition that he should discover to us every thing. This he did, and we perceived clearly by his sincerity and whole conduct, that

it

it was the first time that they had made use of him for such a busines.

We found that the phial really contained some physic (and this we could have perceived ourselves, as all was immediately strictly enquired into before it was brought to the Armenian), but instead of the label, which according to the custom of apothecaries, is tied round the neck of the bottle, we found a note to the Armenian. An unknown person had promised the physician a great sum of money for its delivery, half of which he had already obtained, and the other half he was to receive afterwards, if every thing succeeded well; and in case he should refuse, he had been threatened with death. His confusion at his entrance arose from seeing us, because he did not expect us there at such an unseasonable hour. I looked at the note very attentively, but, except the common direction, I could not make out one word of it. The Doctor told us, that the writing would only become legible when we wetted it, and that he was going to make that known to the Armenian. We did so, and to our astonishment found the following contents, written in a hand so small, that it was scarcely legible.

“ After a thousand fruitless trials to con-
“ vey a letter to your hands, this will, we
“ think, succeed; although necessity forces
“ us to make use of a man as bearer, who
“ is not fit for such a task.

“ Know that you, and we all, have
“ been terribly deceived; the Polish Jew
“ to whom you trusted so much, was
“ Count O... himself, whom we have
“ not yet been able properly to reward for
“ it.

" it. He has delivered your letters to the
" Inquisition, and many others are im-
" prisoned.

" That we have still courage, although
" many of us are imprisoned, and that we
" still hope to save you, this attempt may
" be a proof. If we succeed, then we
" shall likewise be able to liberate the
" others, or at least revenge their death
" under your direction. Despair braves
" everything. A life like ours, in which
" we are in perpetual anxiety lest one of
" the prisoners should be a coward, and
" betray us also, is become absolutely in-
" tolerable; our blood is also in a fermenta-
" tion, that cannot be appeased till all
" means are exhausted.

" We leave it to your prudence to in-
" vent a pretext, by which you may con-
" trive, either this or to-morrow night,
" to be conducted for examination to an-
" other place. Leave the rest to us. Your
" guards may be as many as they will,
" you are ours, and—free. If this should
" not succeed, we shall revenge ourselves,
" in spite of all. They keep secret our
" names, as they have done till now.

" THE CONSPIRATORS."

I was so imprudent, as to read this very loud to the Prince. The Armenian, who had lain till now, in a kind of stupor, which (as I could now perceive) was nothing but attention, jumped up in a rage from his bed; dashed himself, before we could prevent him, so violently against the large iron lock,

lock on the door, that the blood gushed from his head, and he sunk down on the floor. He recovered again, and vented such a profusion of curses and imprecations as I never heard uttered by a mortal; his lips became blue and covered by a yellow froth. It would disgrace this paper to write down his expressions, and they would excite in the reader's breast the most horrid sensations. It was very evident that he must have still expected much from the narration to the Prince, and from the letter delivered to me, in order to procure his escape; and now all was entirely lost to him, and every way for his flight barricadoed.

Dreadful beyond all description was his end. By repeatedly beating his head on the ground, his wound became incurable. The physician gave up all hopes of delivering him safe into the hands of justice, for his well deserved punishment; and they resolved to leave him to himself, as they saw, that the torments he was suffering was more than equal to the penalty which would be inflicted upon him by the most rigorous justice.

Large maggots engendered in his wound, and devoured by piece-meal his brain, which formerly was so full of malice. The consequences of his condition now operated as if they had only waited for that moment to begin their frightful torments. There were holes in every part of his body, and to prolong his torments they gave him the most nourishing food. A pestilential smell spread itself through the whole house. His eyes sunk and decayed in his head, his tongue became black, and gradually dissolved in a putrid saliva, which was discharged from his distorted jaws.

Piece by piece his flesh fell from his rotten bones, and he lived till all the joints separated themselves, and

and his heart which seemed designedly to be preserved healthy, rotted in his breast.

I here drop the curtain over the most horrible scene which the eyes of mortals ever beheld. This spectacle affected us all very greatly, although we kept at a considerable distance from him; but the Prince caught a violent fever, which protracted our stay for eight days longer.

Nothing more was heard during that period of the conspiracy. They however made an attempt to conduct some person instead of the Armenian, from the prison, in order by that trick, to draw the authors of the letter into the trap, but they perceived none of them. Perhaps they might have heard something of what had passed, and prudently had secreted themselves. I pitied most the physician, who was the bearer of the letter. By the noise which the Armenian's head made against the lock of the door, the guard, accompanied by an officer, came in. They must have heard something of his entreaties to us, and the note unfortunately was still in my hands. His anxiety discovered the rest; and this very innocent man, who was only weak enough to be seduced by money, was punished as a traitor again the state.

Thus ended this conspiracy, whose only biographer I am, because a dark veil covers every thing in the history of Venice that could have any relation to it, and which only can be comprehensible to those who are exactly acquainted with it, was a hindrance to all enquiries of every kind, and the unknown criminals were never brought to light.

That I intended to write nothing but the truth I promised at the beginning of this narrative, and that I adhered to that intention in the history of the Armenian,

Armenian, I need scarcely to assert. How far his confessions are true, I am not competent to decide; but that the greatest part, or at least the chief event, could not be a tale, the letters in the history which I have communicated to the reader verbatim, must bear testimony.

By a strict search in the habitation of the Armenian, these letters were found, beside several other writings in a private cupboard. Perhaps they might not have fallen into my hands, if I had not been employed to decypher them, in which business I was very dexterous, and hence I could conveniently take copies of them. At first I had intended to give them, and several other papers of consequence, in an appendix, but I changed my design, and inserted them in the places where the Armenian made mention of them, and I hope the reader will not be displeased.

I suppressed all real names, for which I think nobody will blame me. I wished not to cause any reproach to those to whom reputation is as sacred as to myself. I made it a maxim to give no offence to any family, by representing decoyed villains (members of many families) publicly, if I could possibly avoid it. I think it my duty to add what I heard from the Prince of that period, where his friendship with the Armenian became so very intimate, and from which we knew nothing distinctly till now. He had employed apparitions of ghosts and other methods for the purpose of inspiring the Prince with revenge against the . . . anew, and to obtain the Prince's consent for his assassination. God knows why he thought this necessary! This, and the desire of being seated on the throne, and to blow the mouldering ashes into a great flame, was for him—(Oh, that I must say so!)—happily accomplished.

accomplished. But the Armenian desired still more; he desired that the Prince should for ever bind himself to him by an oath as long as he lived, and be entirely subject unconditionally to his will, without asking him the reason of it.

The good principles of the Prince were not yet so entirely eradicated from his heart as to consent to such a proposal; for his soul was still able to draw the conclusion, in spite of all his prejudices, that the Armenian would not make such a demand if he always designed to display his good intentions. The villain, who was prepared for all, had already seen the possibility of that beforehand, and for that purpose had spared the resurrection of the Prince's beloved. He at that moment beheld it as a miracle, and, intoxicated with love, consented to every thing. Providence destroyed at that period the complicated schemes which it had apparently so long continued to regard with indifference.

We left Venice, and my bosom beat high with joy for some time. I looked back, in order to survey that beautiful prospect perhaps for the last time in my life. I beheld Venice, full of magnificent palaces and churches, surrounded by the sea, reflecting the first beams of Aurora, which gilded the highest pinnacles of ancient edifices with his splendour. The upper part of the sun's bright orb richly illuminated the eastern sky, whilst it seemed hesitating whether to emerge from the serene ocean. My eye was unwearied in beholding this delightful prospect;—but my sensations. Oh! how far different were they from those which I felt at the first sight of this enchanting city!—It now resembled a beautiful prison, ornamented without, which the more we admire, the more we must feel for those who must perish within its walls,

walls, helpless, and sometimes innocent ; and my sadness increased with the approaching day, which rendered the charms of the scene more beautiful, till at last I proceeded so far that it disappeared entirely from my eyes.

We travelled as expeditiously as the health of the Prince would permit, for another letter from **** had once more induced us to be as speedy as possible. About the middle of the journey, Lord Seymour and Johnson left us, and we could scarcely console ourselves for their departure : for the necessary act of separation had torn from us two excellent men, united to our destiny by so many bands of fate. They relieved us from a sorrowful farewell, as they communicated their separation by letters which they left us, for which they received mine, and particularly the Prince's thanks.

"I commend myself to him who rules above," said the Prince, with a look towards heaven, when he saw the farewell letters, and a stream of tears suffocated his words.

I met my faithful Caspar in the same inn where I told him to stay, and I took him with me. His joy was without bounds, and I should have been ashamed if I did not acknowledge what a faithful companion I had again found in him.

We arrived at ***. The **** took the Prince affectionately in his arms.

"Oh ! it is too much !" exclaimed the Prince, as he sunk down before him ; " it too much for a criminal."

I cannot venture to describe the scene, where so much was expressed, although not a word was spoken.

All possible methods to recover the Prince were tried, but in vain. Deep melancholy pourtrayed itself

itself in marked furrows upon his face, from which internal sorrow had long since stolen every blush of health and contentment, formerly planted upon it by tranquillity. His cheeks were haggard, and his gloomy eyes appeared darker, from the shadow of his projecting eyebrows. His head was constantly bowed towards the earth, and in his eyelids were seen a perpetual tear. The idea of a happy eternity, and of a merciful God, alone tranquillized his mind.

In a deep wood there were the ruins of a castle upon a romantic and almost impenetrable mass of rocks covered with mos. This castle formerly belonged to the rapacious ancestors of the house. A whole century was unable to destroy it, and lofty rocks and walls shewed distinctly enough the former impregnability of the Castle of the Robbers, which had excited terror in the breast of every traveller whose way led him by it.

The father of the present was a great admirer of hunting. Very often he pursued the game till night overtook him; and he therefore built for himself, upon that former site of his ancestors, a small castle, where he frequently passed woole weeks in the pursuit of his favourite amusement. Since that time it had been scarcely ever visited, and we were obliged to penetrate through thick bushes to come at a winding walk which led to it. This the Prince chose for his future habitation; and we may easily judge, by the description, how much it was suited to the present temper of his mind, as it stood in a romantic country, and the tranquillity of the solitude was seldom interrupted. His desire was satisfied, and the flattered himself with the hope, that retirement might perhaps work powerfully upon his mind, and

and that the attachment to society would one day awake within him the desire of again revisiting the world. But he had mistaken himself very much. He did not know, after all that had happened to this unfortunate man, added to his general character, that sorrow and melancholy had already so much gained the ascendancy, that happiness could no longer be enjoyed by him. Like a blossom, raised by a nourishing shower upon a barren soil, which immediately fades again, because the hot reflected beams of the sun destroy all powers of vegetation.

Here he lived apart from all society, except an old and faithful servant.

He was not disturbed, because every one honoured his sacred retreat, and . . . sometimes paid him a visit, to see how far his hopes might be fulfilled, but he as constantly refused his request.

At the desire of the Prince, and my own wish, I remained there as long as possible, but business at my own court making my presence necessary, I could not longer delay.

Persuaded that it would deprive me of all former connections, to spend the rest of my days there, I departed; but the unpleasing reflection that I should never again see the Prince, which occupied my mind at my departure, was too well founded. By the many sufferings and struggles which had seized upon me of late so violently, the former stability of my health became very feeble. Not till the lapse of six months was I able to return, and I found, instead of the Prince, the grave which inclosed his remains. I knew nothing of his death, and my heart began fondly to anticipate the feelings of our meeting, as I approached the wood, in which stood his habitation.

It

It was my custom to travel on foot in fine weather, being more agreeable to me, and affording a better opportunity of observing the surrounding objects. I pursued it now. The tears rolled from my cheeks, when I arrived at the foot of a mountain. Above my head the branches of the trees formed a grove, through which we scarcely could perceive the valley underneath, which was ornamented by an opposite hill; upon which, oak trees, the produce of centuries, raised their majestic heads. I stood before a deep dale, and enjoyed the romantic prospect which presented itself to me. I was lost in the contemplation of it, and on each twig my eye dwelt with a voluptuous pleasure.—On surveying the spot attentively, a building appeared through the thick brush-wood which grew upon one side of the valley. As I had not expected this, my curiosity became stimulated to enquire what it was. I marked the spot, and walked towards the bushes, through which I passed with much trouble. As I bent back the last bush, I found myself in a small open space, ornamented with trees and shrubs. Before me I perceived a small cottage, and over against it a large oak tree. In its shade arose a very simple monument, which buried its top in the close covert of the boughs.—I was stepping nearer, when I observed a grey-bearded old man, who was kneeling before it, praying fervently. I stood in silence, and my feelings pressed me to join his devotions. He rose. What a figure!—Without reflecting, my hand seized my hat to uncover my head, that I might pay homage to this venerable old man. In the deep furrows of his forehead and cheek beamed content: a smile upon his countenance was expressive of that tranquillity of conscience which fears

fears not to meet the eternal judge, who is not unmindful of the weakness of human nature. To all appearance he had suffered much from misfortune.

He did not appear to observe me, and went into his cottage. I approached the monument with a sensation which I cannot describe. A short inscription told me, that the Prince slumbered there till the day of resurrection.

Whilst I was rising from the hallowed spot, the old man stood behind me. With emotion he pressed my hand.

" You have prayed :" said he, addressing himself to me. " I observed it with joy and ecstasy. Thus act the children of happiness : be then welcome to me in this solitude, which will neither be disturbed nor dishonoured by you."

" You are right, old man," I answered him. " But I am no child of happiness : he who slumbers here was my friend, and—"

" Are you perhaps the Count O * * * * of whom the deceased spoke so much to me?— Then I understand you before you finish your speech."

I answered his question in the affirmative, and with a sacred ecstasy he led me towards a grass bench before the cottage, where we sat down together.

" Your friend," he began, " journeyed very often quite alone into this wood, and chose the deepest solitude for meditation. Thus he discovered me after your departure in my retirement. I loved him soon, and he was no less fond of me. He frequently went away, but sometimes he tarried with me four days and nights together. Each day he waited for your coming back : you came

not. If he should come (he said to me, a few days before his last,) and I should be no more, then deliver him in my name my farewell, and say that I will thank him for his love in a better world. You are as able to tell him so as I could be myself. Daily I pray near his grave, and from this day I shall thank God that he has given me an opportunity of discharging my commission."

We spoke of nothing but of the Prince. What the old man told me with great prolixity of the last period of his life, I will relate to the reader as briefly as possible. Every trifling particular, although interesting to a friend, would perhaps be insignificant to a third person, and on that account the principal things only are related.

He associated with this old man, sacrificing the remainder of his life to regain that repose of conscience which he formerly enjoyed, and he succeeded as far as his situation made it possible. Firmly convinced of the love of God, death became a friend to him, who would bring him still nearer to the knowledge of this eternal Being, and he looked forward to his dissolution with a mild and patient satisfaction.

"God has still procured me a happiness which I do not deserve," he exclaimed, and delivered to him a letter which he had just received. It was from the Greek lady. The old man shewed it to me, and the following is a copy of it:—



" BELOVED

“ BELOVED of my soul!—Thus I call
 “ you, although the greatest malice has
 “ induced me to deceive you. My con-
 “ science has cleared itself before the
 “ Almighty. I was deceived like your-
 “ self.

“ By birth I am a German lady.—
 “ Death deprived me at Venice of my
 “ mother, and with her of every comfort.
 “ A young unexperienced girl, I was then
 “ abandoned to the wide world. An ac-
 “ cident brought to me in my helpless
 “ situation that Armenian. My person
 “ was allowed by all to possess an at-
 “ tractive beauty, and on that account
 “ only could I explain to myself those
 “ looks which he gave when he threw
 “ himself in my way as a benefactor.—
 “ The good principles which he found
 “ within me, seemed to make it necessary
 “ to proceed carefully with me:—he
 “ appeared a saint. At length I received
 “ directions from him to play the cha-
 “ racter in that church ****, where you
 “ saw me first. He had found way to
 “ play upon my vanity so much by pre-
 “ tence that you had already fallen in
 “ love with my picture, that I not only
 “ earnestly followed his directions, but I
 “ also gave myself all possible trouble to-
 “ interest you, though it was against my
 “ inclination. But too soon I became in
 “ reality what I had only appeared to
 “ you—I loved you tenderly. The fear

" of losing you again, and his tricks and
" threats, prevented me always from dis-
" covering myself to you: many times
" this confession trembled upon my tongue,
" and—"

" My weakness will not longer permit
" me to hold the pen. I feel that the
" hours of my existence are few, and on
" that account I must conclude. More
" than an hundred times I was obliged to
" stop in writing this letter. I discovered
" your abode, and was anxious to find you
" there, and implore your forgiveness—but
" my powers failed me. Instead of me,
" this letter comes, and, alas! may it give
" you a happy sensation. That you will
" not doubt this confession of my innocence
" (as I make it at the brink of the grave,)
" I am convinced as firmly as of my for-
" giveness by God.

" How difficult is it for me to conclude
" this epistle to my beloved; but I am
" compelled to do it, for I feel my weak-
" ness increase upon me, and you proba-
" bly have observed it in several parts of
" what I have written. After my death,
" you will receive this letter, and not to
" disturb you, I conceal the place where
" my remains will slumber until the junc-
" tions of our souls.

" In that abode where the veil, which
" before concealed from us the reason of
" our fate, shall be removed, where a per-
" petual bliss shall unite our souls for ever,
" I will tell you far more than I am now
" able to make known to you!—Farewell!

" Purified

“ Purified by my God from all sins and
 “ faults, and cloathed in the garment of the
 “ blessed at the gates of eternity, I will has-
 “ ten toward you.

“ Your THERESA.”

With this letter the Prince sat himself under an oak-tree, upon the same spot which he had selected for his perpetual rest. He read it very often, whilst the Hermit, who was placed by his side, celebrated her memory in conjunction with the Prince, amidst loud peals of thunder which rolled over them.

“ I shall soon be with thee, Oh Theresa !” exclaimed the Prince, as he lifted his hands and eyes towards Heaven. At that instant, a flash of lightning, attracted by the tree under which they were sitting, darted through the branches, and struck him lifeless to the earth—Peace be to his ashes !

FINIS.

